

**Increasing Choice and Flexibility:  
Changes to Senior Years Graduation Requirements  
Status Report**

**Manitoba Education, Training and Youth  
June 2002**

## Introduction

The intent of this status report is to provide an update on the implementation of the changes that were deferred for further consultation or were part of a multi-year implementation phase as stated in the report *Increasing Choice and Flexibility: Proposed Changes to Senior Years Graduation Requirements*, March 2001 (see web page <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/policy/gradreq/choice-flexibility.html>). This update will include information on all of the eight proposals.

### 1. Categories of Credits

The number of categories of credits was reduced to two: **Compulsory** and **Optional**. The feedback from the field and our educational partners, including parents, has been very positive.

### 2. Locally Developed Curricula: Locally Developed/Acquired Courses (LD/As), School-Initiated Courses (SICs), and Student-Initiated Projects (SIPs)

The Locally Developed/Acquired Courses (LD/As) were eliminated and the number of School-Initiated Courses (SICs) increased to eleven from eight and Student-Initiated Projects (SIPs) increased to three from two. These changes have made possible more local course development to meet student need.

For the coming school year, submissions will continue to be accepted by print, fax or e-mail, and re-registrations are also accepted by telephone. In the fall of 2002, the registration process will be online (English Program) and divisions/schools will be asked whether they would be willing to share their SICs. Because many divisions/schools duplicate writing up similar courses, the online permission to share courses would be beneficial to the entire province's schools.

### 3. Distance Learning Courses

This initiative is well underway and involves a number of partnerships with the Department. Two documents on distance learning were recently released in the Department's bulk mailing. The documents are: ***Distance Learning: A Policy Handbook for Schools/Divisions/Districts*** and ***Suggested Guidelines for the Development and Peer Review of Online Distance Learning Courses: A Supplement to Distance Learning: A Policy Handbook for Schools/Divisions/Districts***. These documents were reviewed by a focus group of superintendents in a consultation meeting held in February 2002.

When reporting student marks, those provincial distance learning online courses based on Manitoba's curricular outcomes will use the same ***Subject Table Handbook*** course code as courses based on Manitoba's print curricula. Out-of-province distance learning courses (print and online) have a new category of course codes in the ***Subject Table Handbook***. This also means that acquired print and online courses from out-of-province do not require a SIC submission.

### 4. Challenging for Senior Years Course Credits

This proposal was delayed for one year to resolve some of the concerns raised during the original consultation survey. These issues have now been addressed. Two consultations were subsequently held with principals and a third with a focus group of superintendents. The guidelines and forms suggested during this past year

are included in Attachment A. School divisions may implement the Challenge for Credit Option at the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year. All school divisions are expected to have developed local policies and procedures for a province-wide implementation of this option in the 2003-2004 school year.

**5. Post-secondary Credits and Senior Years (Dual Credits)**

This initiative has been in place for the 2001-2002 school year. Schools from across the province have registered with the Department the university/college courses that their students are taking to ensure that the reporting of marks can be accomplished, using the correct university/college title for the course. The Department has prepared guidelines to assist schools. It is important that schools check with the university/college about their policy for issuing transcripts and acceptance of other post-secondary institutions credits. Schools will continue to report marks in percentages and this requirement should also enter into their discussion with the institutions.

**6. Credit for Community Service (Student-initiated Project - SIP)**

This initiative was delayed for one year. A consultation meeting was held with principals from across the province in November 2001. Based on their feedback, the proposed guidelines were revised and legal opinion was requested on the issue of liability. Because this volunteer opportunity is not a program or a course, schools may process these student requests in a similar way to accepting student evidence of credit for the Private Music Option, where again, the Department or school has no liability. Student activity done outside of a school course, in this case volunteering, can be given credit if a student meets the conditions of the guidelines and brings the completed forms. The guidelines and forms are included in Attachment B.

These SIPs are not to be registered with the Department. A Community Service SIP course code (code 8977) will be in the **Subject Table Handbook** for reporting a pass (no percentage mark).

**7. Credits for Extracurricular Activities**

The consultation results indicated strong disagreement with the proposed initiative. This proposed change will not be implemented.

**8. Substitution of Credits in Unusual Situations**

This change will be piloted over a period of three years. School divisions/schools can choose whether or not to implement this change. A substitution of a maximum of two (2) credits can be made in any subject area conditional on parent/guardian approval. A letter was sent to the field in September 2001 asking whether divisions would participate. Some divisions have responded affirmatively and have chosen to develop their own divisional policy regarding substitution of credits.