

**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.

Guidelines for Implementing the Challenge for Credit Option Senior 1 to Senior 4

All school divisions are expected to develop and implement policies and procedures based on the following guidelines related to the Challenge for Credit Option. School divisions may choose to implement the Challenge for Credit Option at the beginning of the 2002-03 school year. It should be noted that all school divisions are expected to have developed local policies and procedures for a province-wide implementation of this option for the 2003-04 school year.

Intent of the Challenge for Credit Option

Education, Training and Youth recognizes that students may, in exceptional circumstances, have already acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a particular course. Challenge for Credit Option provides a process for students to demonstrate that they have achieved learning outcomes as defined in the Manitoba curriculum for a directly-related course. Requirements to earn a credit via challenge should not be more demanding than the requirements to earn the credit through regular instruction; this should involve demonstrating that the student can meet the curriculum learning outcomes in an appropriate way.

These guidelines do not apply to the Special Language Credit Option or the Private Music Option as policy on these opportunities already exist.

This option is intended to serve particular needs such as:

- students who, by virtue of special talents or private study, can be accelerated in particular subject areas;
- students transferring into a Manitoba school from another jurisdiction whose placement in a subject/grade would be facilitated by such a provision;
- students whose educational attendance has been interrupted through sickness or other reasons and who may be able to successfully challenge the learning outcomes of a particular subject area, in which they were previously unable to enrol;
- students who were previously home schooled;
- students who are considered exceptional achievers in a certain area;
- students who can demonstrate that they have met course requirements through life experiences such as independent study, world of work, volunteer activities, and hobbies.

Guidelines

1. The Challenge for Credit Option may be used from Senior 1 to Senior 4.
2. To ensure an adequate demonstration of learning outcomes and a reliable evaluation of achievement, various assessment strategies should be used as in regular classroom setting (formal tests, evaluation of written assignments, portfolio of work, interviews, demonstrations/performances, laboratory work, research paper(s)/essay(s), quizzes, practical examinations, skill demonstrations and simulations, etc.). It is important to note that the Challenge for Credit Option for a particular course may include a combination of assessment strategies and skill demonstration methods. The intent is to allow a student to demonstrate prior learning in an appropriate way.

3. A student in Senior 1 or in Senior 4 who successfully completes a compulsory course challenge is expected to write provincial standards tests.
4. Only students who have not completed the course through previous enrolment should be eligible to challenge for credit. This means that a student who has successfully completed a course cannot use the Challenge for Credit Option to raise his/her mark.
5. A student who challenges the course, either successfully or unsuccessfully, may subsequently choose to take the course.
6. A student may attempt a particular course challenge only once. If the student is unsuccessful, but wants credit in the course or wishes to raise her/his mark, the student is required to take the course. Related documentation should be part of the student cumulative file.
7. A student who successfully demonstrates through the Challenge for Credit Option that he/she possesses the learning outcomes for the course would be awarded a final course mark and credit.
8. In principle, there is no limit to the number of courses that a student may challenge. However, it is expected that only in exceptional circumstances would a student attempt to challenge multiple courses.
9. In order to be eligible to participate in the Challenge for Credit Option, a student must be enrolled in the school division.
10. A school should not charge registered students or their families a fee for administering course challenges. (The Special Language Credit Option uses community examiners who charge a fee for conducting the examination).
11. School divisions/districts are not obliged to provide challenge for provincial courses which are not taught in the division.

School Divisions Responsibilities

1. Develop a policy that governs the administration of Challenge for Credit Option.

School Responsibilities

1. Establish procedures to communicate to parents/guardians and students the availability, procedures, objectives, and assessment strategies for the Challenge for Credit Option.
2. Provide the opportunity, when necessary, for the Challenge for Credit Option.
3. Determine the student's readiness for the Challenge for Credit Option through consultation that includes the student, parent/guardians(s), and subject teacher(s). The consultation should include evidence that the student has a reasonable possibility to meet the learning outcomes for the course.

4. Ensure that assessment for the Challenge for Credit Option includes strategies that will assess the breadth and scope of the learning outcomes for the course as presented in the curriculum documents, in a timely and practical manner.
5. Assign the administration and evaluation of assessment for a course challenge to a certified teacher who has taught the course.
6. Develop an *Intent to Challenge* form. School divisions may establish specific dates for accepting and reviewing challenge applications. Others may decide challenges must be completed at specific times so courses can be planned for the upcoming year. If a small number of students are requesting challenge, scheduling the Challenge for Credit Option at the convenience of all participants may be more manageable than setting specified time.
7. Grant students, who successfully complete a challenge, equivalent credit for the course. The mark is to be submitted to Education, Training and Youth.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students who request the opportunity to challenge a course must be able to provide reasonable evidence that they have some likelihood of completing the challenge successfully such as appropriate independent study, world of work, volunteer activities, and hobbies.
2. Students have to complete a notice of intent form as developed by the school division.
3. Students must comply with the division policy for the Challenge for Credit Option.

APPENDIX A1

Re: Guidelines for Implementing the Challenge for Credit Option Questions to consider in the development of local policies

The following questions are presented to guide development of local policies related to the Challenge for Credit Option:

Assessment

1. What type of assessment strategies will be used to assess prior learning?
2. Which assessment strategies are the most appropriate for each course?
3. How will the assessment strategies vary from one discipline to the other?
4. Will there be a formal test?
5. If there is a formal test, what will be the weights given to the results?
6. What is the minimal passing grade?
7. How will the percentage mark attained be recorded on the student's transcript?
8. Will the student's transcript make reference to the challenge option?

Challenge Requirements

1. What information will the student be asked to provide to initiate the challenge?
2. Will the student be asked to provide the support of one person with recognized expertise in the area of challenge (e.g. teacher, private art instructor, director of a theatre school, etc.?)

Parental Involvement

1. How will the parents/guardians be informed of the challenge option? Will any information be included in the school prospectus? How will the school ensure that parents/guardians have a clear understanding of the Challenge for Credit Option implications?
2. On what basis will the parents/guardians be able to choose between regular class attendance and the challenge for Credit Option; how will the parents/guardians know what is more appropriate for the student's achievement?
3. Will the parents/guardians be asked to sign an approval form? (Appendix A2)

Students

1. Will the student be asked to sign a letter of agreement? (Appendix A3)

Administrative Considerations

1. What process will be put in place to determine the decision to proceed or not with the challenge option?
2. Who will be responsible to determine this decision? The principal?
3. What will be the role of the guidance counsellor?
4. Will there be specific time during the school year where the student will need to indicate his/her interest to challenge a course? Beginning of school year/semester? End of school year/semester?
5. Will the school division establish specific dates for accepting and reviewing challenge applications?
6. Will the school division decide that the challenges must be completed at specific times so that courses can be planned for the upcoming year?
7. Will scheduling the challenge process at the convenience of participants be more manageable than setting specified time (i.e. if only a small number of students a requesting challenge)?
8. What if a student wants to challenge a course not offered in the division? How will the school division respond to this request?
9. What type of report form will be developed? (Appendix A4)

APPENDIX A2

Parent/Guardian Approval Form – Notice of Intent to Challenge for Credit

This form must be submitted to the school principal no later than _____
DATE

I have read and understood the attached policies regarding Challenge for Credit Option. I understand that my son/daughter/ward is prepared to demonstrate his/her acquisition of the course learning outcomes for

_____ at the end of _____
NAME OF COURSE AND GRADE LEVEL MONTH

I am aware that the Challenge for Credit Option will count for 100% of the final mark for the course he/she is challenging. (Provincial standards tests for the Senior 4 compulsory subject areas will account for 30% of the student's final mark).

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Course to be challenged: _____

Previous courses taken in this subject area:

Course	Teacher/School/Organisation	Mark/Standing

To be completed by the student:

Reasons for the challenge for credit request:

Please comment on the following:

- How will the course credit help you to fulfil your educational goals?
- What are your special interests and skills related to this course?
- How are you planning to demonstrate that you have already acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes of this particular course?

APPENDIX A3

Challenge for Credit Option for a Course Credit

Letter of Agreement between the Student and the School

(This letter of agreement has to be co-signed by the student, the parent/guardian and the school principal no later than _____)

Surname: _____ Given Names: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

School: _____

I wish to challenge for credit for the following course:

Course Name	Course Grade/Level	Course Code

I will be submitting the following as evidence that I am qualified to challenge for credit this course:

	Letter(s) of recommendation from teacher(s) familiar with the course learning outcomes
	Letter(s) of recommendation from member(s) of the community
	A portfolio of relevant work
	Proof of successful relevant experience
	Proof of independent learning a relevant area
	Sample of relevant work
	Proof of relevant prior learning from another educational jurisdiction
	Proof of successful completion of courses
	Others

Student Signature : _____

Date: _____

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

For office use only:

Date application received: _____

Date challenge for credit option completed: _____

Result: _____

APPENDIX A4

Challenge for Credit Option Assessment Strategies Used

Final Report Form

Assessment Strategies	Date Completed	Level of Achievement

Percentage Grade _____

Signatures

Subject Teacher: _____ Date: _____
Student: _____ Date: _____
Guidance Counsellor: _____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

GUIDELINES FOR A COMMUNITY SERVICE STUDENT-INITIATED PROJECT CREDIT

Students can make a contribution by volunteering for worthwhile causes or organizations. The civic skills, knowledge and attitudes obtained from such community service activity can increase a student's self esteem and maturity, and provide more awareness of the needs of others in the community. A credit may be available to a student who participates in such activity in the senior years for graduation purposes and **does not require departmental registration**. The process for obtaining the credit is similar to the one used for the Private Music Option where students provide evidence of music standing by presenting written documentation for the activity in which the student participates outside the school system.

Student: Roles and Responsibilities:

To obtain a Community Service SIP credit a student is required to:

- Discuss this credit opportunity with his/her parents/guardians and provide the school with a completed and signed copy of the Parent/Guardian Approval Form.
- Indicate his/her intention to participate in a community service activity for the purpose of obtaining a Community Service SIP Credit to the school prior to commencing the activity and the start of the school semester and discuss the anticipated civic skills, knowledge and attitudes that will be obtained by the student as a result of the community service activity in order to obtain a preliminary evaluation from the school respecting whether the school will recognize the proposed community service activity for a Community Service SIP credit and the level of credit that will be recognized for that activity.
- Understand that, given that there is no formal course, course enrolment is not required.
- Participate in a community service activity a minimum of 110 hours for a full credit or 55 hours for a one-half credit and, together with the community organization or group, keep track of his/her hours.
- Understand that a student may earn a maximum of only one (1) credit over the entire senior years program using the Community Service SIP credit opportunity. This credit can be at the 11G, 21G, 31G, or 41G level and can be applied to the 28 credits required for graduation purposes. Whether community service activity will be recognized for a Community Service SIP credit and the level of credit that will be recognized will be based upon the level of the civic skills, knowledge and attitudes obtained by the student in the community service activity and evaluated by the school prior to the commencement of the activity and confirmed by the school upon completion of the community service activity.
- Provide the school with documentation, e.g., a letter from the community organization or group or a SIP approval form indicating that participation took place, when it took place the number of hours contributed by the student and the civic skills, knowledge and attitudes obtained in the community service activity.
- Understand that a credit obtained for a Community Service SIP is for an activity that is outside the regular school program, does not include formal enrolment, or work that is part of a course approved by Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. It does not include a work education program or a program that is conducted off the school premises under the authority of a school board.
- Understand that in evaluating the community service activity prior to the commencement of the activity, the school will evaluate only the civic skills, knowledge and attitudes to be obtained in the activity and will not evaluate any hazards that may be associated with the community services activity. Neither the school, the school division nor Manitoba Education, Training and Youth will be liable for any injury to the student or for any damage to or loss of property of the student caused by or in any way related to the student's participation in a community service activity.
- Assume along with parents/guardians the responsibility for safety. A student should discuss concerns relating to the community service activity with his or her parents/guardians and, together, they should exercise discretion, be aware of safety issues and investigate the community organization's or group's liability insurance coverage for volunteers before deciding that the student will participate in the community service activity.
- Understand that withdrawal from the community service activity is possible at any time for any reason, including for the reason that the community service activity workplace conditions are not acceptable to the student or his or her parents/guardians.

- Understand that a community service activity will not be recognized for a Community Service SIP credit where the activity involves assisting immediate family members.
- Understand that a Community Service SIP credit is an optional credit.
- Understand that in order for a community service activity to be recognized for a Community Service SIP credit, no remuneration or honorarium can be accepted.
- Understand that court imposed community service cannot be used for the Community Service SIP credit.

School: Roles and Responsibilities: (Administrators and Teachers)

- Discuss this credit opportunity with the Advisory Council for School Leadership/Parent Council representing the school.
- Notify teachers and students about the introduction of this new optional credit opportunity and the requirements for recognition of a community service activity for a Community Service SIP credit.
- Provide parents/guardians with information about the credit so that they can discuss this optional opportunity with their children and decide whether they wish to have their sons/daughters participate.
- Provide Parent/Guardian Approval Forms to students who wish to participate and make decisions on whether to approve or not.
- Recognize a Community Service SIP Credit that has been recognized by another school or school division.
- Record the Community Service SIP credit using the code 8977 provided by Manitoba Education, Training and Youth for reporting the credit. The Community Service SIP does not require registration with Manitoba Education, Training and Youth as do other SIPs that have a classroom component and are monitored by a teacher.

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth: Roles and Responsibilities

- Provide Guidelines for the Community Service Student-initiated Project (SIP).
- Encourage schools to inform Advisory Councils for School Leadership and Parent Councils about this opportunity.
- Clarify the difference between the Community Service SIP Credit and the SIP Credit that has a classroom component, is monitored by a classroom teacher and must be registered with Manitoba Education, Training and Youth.
- Arrange to have reporting of student credit as "pass/fail".
- Provide a mechanism (course code) for schools to use in reporting the credit.
- Share the information about liability. Neither the school, the school division nor Manitoba Education, Training and Youth will be liable for any injury to the student or for any damage to or loss of property of the student caused by or in any way related to the student's participation in a community service activity. A student and his or her parents/guardians bear the responsibility for the student's safety. A student should discuss concerns about the nature of the community service activity with his or her parents/guardians and, together, they should exercise discretion, be aware of safety issues and investigate the community organization's or group's liability insurance coverage for volunteers before deciding that the student will participate in the community service activity.

Community Service Student-initiated Project (SIP) Parent/Guardian Approval Form

I have discussed the Community Service Student-initiated Program (SIP) Credit Option with my son/daughter/ward and support my son's/daughter's/ward's participation in this Credit Option in the following community service activity:

I am aware:

- that participation by a student in a community service activity may, but will not necessarily, be recognized by the school for a senior years credit and that whether a credit will be recognized and the level of credit that will be recognized will be based on the civic skills, knowledge and attitudes that are obtained by the student in the activity, which will be evaluated by the school prior to the student's participation and confirmed by the school following completion of the activity;
- that a maximum of one credit can be earned as a Community Service SIP Credit which can be used towards the 28 credits required for graduation;
- that participation by a student in a community service activity prior to him or her obtaining permission from the school to proceed with the activity cannot be applied towards a Community Service SIP Credit;
- that a community service activity will not be recognized for a Community Service SIP credit where the activity involves assisting immediate family members;
- that in order for a community service activity to be recognized for a Community Service SIP credit, no remuneration or honorarium can be accepted by the student;
- that court imposed community service cannot be used for the Community Service SIP credit;
- that participation by a student in a community service activity for a Community Service SIP Credit is a private activity outside the regular school program;
- that a student who participates in a community service activity for a Community Service SIP Credit Option is not enrolled in a course nor is he or she performing work that is part of a course that is approved by Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, and is not engaging in a work education program nor participating in a program conducted off the school premises under the authority of a school board;
- that in evaluating the community service activity prior to the commencement of the activity by the student, the school will evaluate only the civic skills and knowledge to be obtained by the student in the activity and will not evaluate any hazards that may be associated with the community services activity;
- that neither the school, the school division nor Manitoba Education, Training and Youth will be liable for any injury to the student or for any damage to or loss of property of the student caused by or in any way related to the student's participation in a community service activity;
- that a student and his or her parents/guardians bear the responsibility for the student's safety. A student should discuss concerns about the nature of the community service activity with his or her parents/guardians and together, they should exercise discretion, be aware of safety issues and investigate the community organization's or group's liability insurance coverage for volunteers before deciding that the student will participate in the community service activity;
- that a student may withdraw from the community service activity at any time for any reason, including for the reason that the community service activity workplace conditions are not acceptable to the student or his or her parents/guardians.

I have read and understand the above information.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature of Student

Date

APPENDIX B2

Community Service Student-initiated Project (SIP) Approval Form

The Community Service Student-initiated Project (SIP) Credit Option enables students who make a contribution to their community by volunteering for worthwhile causes or organizations to receive recognition for the civic skills, knowledge and attitudes obtained in the volunteer activity.

The volunteering done by students participating in this SIP is not the responsibility of the school, school division or Manitoba Education, Training and Youth but an opportunity made available to students to obtain credit for private activity - a process similar to obtaining credit for the Private Music Option where students provide documentation on their standing to the school following completion of the activity.

Student Information: (to be completed by Student)

Student Name: _____
School Attended: _____
School Address: _____
Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____ Fax: _____
Community Organization/Group Name: _____

Learning Outcomes Achieved: (to be completed by Student)

Civic knowledge, skills and attitudes obtained during this volunteering activity: _____

Remuneration (payment) is not permissible I was paid ____/not paid ____ for the community service work.
Commencement Date: _____ Completion Date: _____
Number of Hours of Volunteer Time: (minimum 55 hrs. - .5 credit and minimum 110 hrs. - 1 credit) _____

Community Service Information: (to be completed by Community Service Organization/Group)

I confirm that the above stated information is true.

Contact Person Name (please print): _____
Contact Person Signature Approval (signature): _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Credit Approval: (to be completed by School)

Community Service Credit Value: *0.5 or 1.0* Course Level: 11G 21G 31G 41G
(Circle one only) (Circle one level only)

Signatures: (to be completed by Parent/Guardian, Student, School)

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____
Signature of School Contact Person: _____ Date: _____