



# Information for Students

## *Planning to Write Diploma Exams*

Are you writing a diploma exam soon? We can help.

### **Diploma exams 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 exams?**

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

**Note:** Students must have photo ID when they write diploma exams. If you cannot produce photo ID, you will **NOT** be allowed to write the exam.

### **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 you are uncertain about your status as a mature student, please call the Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) and Student Records at 780-422-9337 (toll-free 310-0000 within Alberta).

### **How do I register to write diploma exams?**

If you are taking a diploma exam course for the first time through an accredited Alberta high school, then your school will register you to write the examination for the course in which you are enrolled.

If you intend to rewrite a diploma exam for a course you are currently retaking through an accredited Alberta high school, you are responsible for registering and paying the rewrite fee prior to the exam at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams/rewrites.aspx>.

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

Mature students may write diploma exams without taking diploma exam courses and may write these exams in the November, January, April, June, or August writing sessions. If you are a mature student and intend to write a diploma exam without taking the course, you

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Check out our website at [education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx).

must submit a completed *Diploma Examination Registration/Rewrite Fee Payment Form* to Alberta Education by the dates specified on the form. You also need to make arrangements with the principal of the high school or the designated writing centre where you intend to write so that space and an exam will be available for you.

Online registration can also be completed using Alberta Education’s self-service website myPass. For more information, please visit the myPass homepage at <https://public.education.alberta.ca/PASI/myPass>.

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

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

If you have to be out of the province when the diploma exams are written, you may, under certain circumstances, be permitted to write at a Special Writing Centre. Ask your principal for more information.

**Note:** In the 2015–2016 school year, the following diploma exams are available in these sessions.

**Both November 2015 and April 2016**

- English Language Arts 30–1
- English Language Arts 30–2
- Social Studies 30–1
- Social Studies 30–2
- Biology 30
- Chemistry 30
- Mathematics 30–1
- Physics 30

**April 2016—Digital Only**

- Science 30
- Mathematics 30–2

### When is the deadline to register to write or rewrite diploma exams?

The deadlines to register to write or rewrite diploma exams are specific to the session in which the exams 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 *Diploma Examination General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at [education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx](https://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx).

### What is a diploma exam rewrite fee and how do I pay it?

If you are rewriting a diploma exam that you wrote in the current or two previous school years (since September 1, 2013), you are required to pay a rewrite fee of \$26.25 (including GST) per exam. The rewrite fee for foreign/exchange students—visiting or exchange students from outside Alberta—is \$50.00 (including GST) per exam.

### 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”. You may also come in person to the Transcript Unit, 2nd Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard, 10044–108 Street, Edmonton, where you can make payment using cash, debit card, cheque, money order, or major credit card. Effective September 25, 2015, you may also choose to pay online using your myPass account. Payment **must** be submitted and received prior to the exam date.

Check out our website at [education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx](https://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx).

### What if I am ill and can't write a diploma exam that I'm registered for?

If illness, school closure, or an accident or death in your immediate family prevents you from writing a diploma exam for which you are registered, or if you get sick during an exam, see your principal or counsellor about what to do. If you have registered and paid to rewrite one or more diploma exams and, for any of the reasons above, you are unable to write your exams, the rewrite fee is non-refundable and cannot be transferred to other diploma exam sessions. Information and methods for registering and paying for diploma exam rewrites can be found at this website: <http://education.alberta.ca/students/exams/rewrite>.

### Can I have special provisions (accommodations) for writing diploma exams?

Accommodations such as additional time, CD versions of exams, large print, and Braille are available if you have a special diploma exam writing need. See your school counsellor or principal for more information.

### Are diploma exams available in French?

All diploma exams, except English Language Arts 30–1 and English Language Arts 30–2, are translated into French. Science 30 is only offered in French in June 2016 in an exclusively digital format. If you are in a Francophone or alternate French Language Arts program, you may choose to write an exam in English or in French, regardless of your language of instruction. If you have studied a course in French, your teacher may assume that you will write the exam in French; therefore, you need to notify your principal at least **90 days** before the exam date should you decide to write an exam 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 exam for French 30. French Language Arts 30–1 is an advanced French course designed for students in an alternate French Language Arts program. If you are enrolled in French Language Arts 30–1, you **must** write the French Language Arts 30–1 diploma exam in order to obtain a final course mark. Français 30–1 is a French language and literature course for students in Francophone programs. If you are enrolled in Français 30–1, you **must** write the Français 30–1 diploma exam in order to obtain a final course mark.

### What materials do I need?

For all exams, you are responsible for your own writing materials—pens, HB pencils, calculators, etc. Tear-out pages for rough work are provided in each biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, and science exam booklet. For more information about the materials that are required and allowed for the writing of diploma exams, 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx).

### Are there other exam rules I need to know?

There are very specific rules that you must follow when writing diploma exams. 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx).

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### How are diploma exams marked?

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

### How are my official final marks calculated?

To pass a diploma exam course, you must earn a final “blended” mark of at least 50%. On September 1, 2015, the diploma exam weighting shifted from a 50/50 weighting to a 70/30 weighting where the school-awarded grades are worth 70%. If, for example, in Chemistry 30, you receive a mark of 56% from your school and a mark of 44% on the diploma exam, your final mark is 52%. Further information regarding the 70/30 weighting can be found in the Marks, Results, and Appeals section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin/>.

If you are a mature student, you are not required to have a school mark. If you pass the diploma exam and have no school mark, you automatically receive credit for the course. If you do have a school mark and it is lower than your diploma exam mark, your final mark will be the exam mark only. If your school mark is higher than your diploma exam mark, the two marks will be blended in the usual way.

While thorough exam development procedures are used, with the intent of making the diploma exams in a given course as identical in difficulty as possible for each administration, the exams still may vary slightly in difficulty. The process of equating allows Alberta Education to address these differences, so that a mark on an exam means

the same thing no matter at which session a student writes the exam. The use of this process enhances fairness to students and enables the direct comparison of results from one exam session to another.

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

You can find more detail on Alberta Education’s website at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/standards/>— see *Initiative to Maintain Consistent Standards on Diploma Examinations*.

### How do I get my results?

You can access your diploma exam marks online via **myPass**, approximately 3½ weeks after writing. The *Results Statement*, which lists your most recent school and diploma exam marks, is not an official transcript. An *Alberta Official High School Transcript of Student Achievement* is available to you at a cost. For more details see High School Transcripts on the Alberta Education website at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/transcripts.aspx>.

If you repeat a course or rewrite a diploma exam, your transcript will show the highest school-awarded and diploma exam marks earned. You must request and pay for a new transcript if you upgrade your marks.

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

Check out our website at [education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx).

## What is myPass?

myPass is a student self-service website that enables 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. On September 25, 2015 students will be able to register for diploma exams, and in 2016 students will also be able to request re-scores. If assistance is required with myPass, students may contact the Client Services Help Desk at 780-427-531.

## Is there an appeal process for school-awarded marks?

If you are dissatisfied with a school mark, you may appeal to your principal under the appeal policy set by your local school authority.

## Is there an appeal process for diploma exam marks?

If you believe that your diploma exam mark does not accurately reflect your level of achievement in a course, you may rewrite the exam or ask to have it rescored. To request a rescore of a diploma exam you can apply online **or** submit the *Diploma Examination Rescore Application Form* at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx>. Payment for rescoring can be made at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams/rewrites/>.

The deadline to request a rescore is provided on your *Results Statement*. Requests received after the deadline **will not be granted**. The fee for rescoring each exam is \$26.25 (including GST). This fee is refunded if your exam mark is raised by 5% or more as a result of a rescore. The mark resulting from rescoring becomes your **final exam mark, even if it is lower than the original mark**. Your most recent school-awarded mark will be blended

with the rescore exam mark, and a new *Results Statement* will be available on myPass. You should know, however, that rescoring the machine-scored section rarely changes the score. Refer to the written-response raw score reported on your *Results Statement* to help you decide if you want your exam rescored.

If you have explored all avenues of appeal at your jurisdictional level and feel you have a case requiring special consideration, you 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.

If you appeal to the Special Cases Committee, you must concurrently advise the principal of the school and the superintendent of the school authority where you received instruction. For further information about the operations of the Special Cases Committee, please contact the Special Cases Committee by e-mail at [special.cases@gov.ab.ca](mailto:special.cases@gov.ab.ca).

## How can I improve my mark?

You may repeat a course without rewriting the diploma exam or rewrite a diploma exam without repeating the course. You will have to pay a rewrite fee for any diploma exam since September 1, 2013, that you rewrite.

**Remember:** When you repeat a course or rewrite a diploma exam, your new *Results Statement* will list your most recently earned marks; your new transcript, if you request one, will show only the **highest** diploma exam marks and **highest** school-awarded marks earned since September 2013.

Check out our website at [education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx](http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx).

### Where can I get further information?

For more information on these topics, contact your school principal or counsellor and ask to see the *Guide to Education, ECS to Grade 12*, and/or the *General Information Bulletin*, Diploma Examinations Program.

You can also visit our website at [education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams.aspx).

### Alberta Education Contacts

To be connected toll-free within Alberta to government offices, call 310-0000.

- Results Statements: 780-422-9337
- Transcripts: 780-427-5732
- Rewrite Fees: 780-427-5732
- Diploma Certificates: 780-427-5732
- Mature Student Status: 780-422-9337
- Special Cases Inquiries: 780-427-0010
- Provincial Assessment Sector: 780-427-0010
- Statement of Courses and Marks:  
780-427-5732



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