

Policy Name: Challenge & Equivalency Policy (High School)	Responsible Owner: Principal	Effective Date: September 10, 2026
Policy Number: 2.26	Approval Body: Board of Governors	

A. POLICY:

PURPOSE/COMMITMENT:

This policy establishes the framework for recognizing and assessing prior learning consistent with the British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. This policy ensures that all students have fair, transparent, and timely access to processes that recognize prior learning and support their progress toward graduation, while maintaining the integrity of the BC graduation program.

Through this Policy, Columbia College (the School) commits to:

- Adhering to the Ministry of Education and Child Care policy on credit recognition and ensuring that all equivalency and challenge credits awarded align with approved learning standards and graduation requirements.
- Providing equal access to the equivalency and challenge processes and assessing prior educational achievements fairly and consistently regardless of citizenship, immigration status, or country of prior education.
- Offering clear guidance and support to students, and guardians so they can navigate the equivalency and challenge processes effectively.
- Demonstrating a fair, transparent, and timely process for resolving disagreements related to equivalency, challenge, and graduation credit decisions.

DEFINITIONS:

Equivalency Credit: Credit awarded for a Grade 10, 11, or 12 course successfully completed through documented prior learning at an educational jurisdiction or institution outside the BC school system.

Challenge Credit: Credit awarded to a student who demonstrates, through an assessment process, mastery of the curricular competencies and course content without having formally completed that course through enrolment.

Transfer Standing (TS): A transcript notation used when credit is awarded but a letter grade or percentage cannot be determined from the documentation provided.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all students enrolled in high school credit programs at Columbia College.

B. PROCEDURES:

The responsibility for the modification of the procedure falls under the responsibility of the VP Academic or designate.

Roles and Responsibilities:

School Administration:

1. Ensure compliance with [BC Ministry of Education policies](#) regarding equivalency and challenge credits.
2. Provide clear guidelines and resources to students and staff.
3. Maintain accurate records of all credits awarded.

Students

1. Provide all necessary documentation for equivalency credit evaluations. This could include, but is not limited to;
 - a. Transcript of official record of completion of the course and the assigned mark.
Note: transcripts in a language other than English will need to be translated
 - b. Documentation of the course content and requirements.
2. Prepare for and complete assessments as part of the challenge credit process.
3. Seek guidance and clarification from school staff as needed.

Guardians

1. Support students in navigating the equivalency and challenge credit processes.
2. Ensure timely submission of required documents.

Process

1. Upon enrolment, students will meet with academic advisors to discuss their educational background and review the options for equivalency and challenge credits. This meeting will establish a pathway for meeting graduation requirements.
2. The School will regularly review equivalency and challenge credit processes to ensure alignment with BC Ministry of Education policies.
3. Academic Advisors and Admission staff will receive ongoing training on evaluating international transcripts and administering challenge assessments.
4. Students and guardians will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the process, which will be used to make improvements.

Equivalency Credits

1. The School will award equivalency credits to 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.
2. Students must submit official transcripts and Ministry or national authorized course outlines from accredited educational institutions as proof of prior learning. Official translated transcripts from their previous school(s) must be validated by an authorized agency.

3. The School will verify and evaluate the submitted documents for alignment with BC learning standards.
4. 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

1. Students may challenge courses to earn credits if they can demonstrate mastery of the course content without formal enrolment. This process is designed to acknowledge informal or non-traditional learning experiences.
2. 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.
3. Students may not challenge courses for which they have already received equivalency credits.
4. A meeting with an academic advisor 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.
5. The assessment will be evaluated based on the BC curriculum standards to determine if credit should be granted.
6. Students and their guardians will be notified of the evaluation outcome. If challenge credits are determined to have met the criteria, appropriate credits will be awarded and recorded on the student's transcript.

Conflict Resolution

1. If students or guardians disagree with the decisions regarding equivalency or challenge credits, they may:
 - a. Discuss the issue with the Academic Advisor involved in the assessment.
 - b. If the student or guardian is not satisfied with the discussion, or is not comfortable discussing with the academic advisor, they may submit a written appeal to the School principal or designate, providing detailed reasons and supporting evidence.