

Guide to Locally Developed Courses, Grades 9 to 12

**DEVELOPMENT AND
APPROVAL PROCEDURES**

2004

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Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant : *Guide pour les cours élaborés à l'échelon local de la 9^e à la 12^e année – Processus d'élaboration et d'approbation, 2004.*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

Introduction

Ontario's schools are committed to offering an education program that prepares all students for further education and work, and helps them to become independent, productive, and responsible members of society. The secondary school program is designed to give students the learning opportunities, flexibility, and support they need to meet the curriculum expectations in their courses and to proceed towards a diploma. Ministry policy provides a wide range of strategies and program options for schools to use to enable students to achieve the provincial curriculum expectations and to prepare for their postsecondary destinations. In cases where students' educational and/or career preparation needs cannot be met by courses authorized by the provincial curriculum policy documents, school boards, school authorities, Provincial Schools, and inspected private schools may develop courses locally that can be counted as credits for diploma purposes.

Ministry policy with respect to locally developed courses is defined in *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999* (OSS), section 7.1.2. All locally developed courses, with the exception of religious education credit courses developed by Roman Catholic district school boards, must be approved by the ministry. The present document provides information to assist school boards¹ in preparing their submissions to the ministry for approval of locally developed courses in Grades 9 to 12.

This document replaces the *Guide to Locally Developed Courses, Grades 9 to 12: Approval Requirements and Procedures, 2000*.

1. Unless specified otherwise, the term *school boards*, as used throughout this document, includes district school boards, school authorities, Provincial Schools, and inspected private schools.

Considerations Before Developing a Credit Course Locally

Before developing a credit course locally, school boards should first consider whether any of the various strategies and program options listed below (some of which are identified in OSS, section 5.5.1) would adequately meet the needs of the students for whom the course is intended:

- programs that combine credit courses and remedial skills programs to support achievement in English, mathematics, and science;
- provincial credit courses on learning strategies that schools may offer to assist students in consolidating their skills. Schools may offer a learning strategies course to students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in each of Grades 9 to 12 and to students who do not have an IEP in Grade 9 and Grade 12. For the Grade 9 course (Learning Strategies 1: Skills for Success in Secondary School), see *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: Guidance and Career Education, 1999*. For the Grade 12 course (Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School), see *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Guidance and Career Education, 2000*;
- academic support programs to assist students in completing course requirements and earning credits. Features of such programs include individualized programming, peer-assisted activities, workshops, small-group study, and community-based mentoring;
- tutorial programs involving postsecondary students (e.g., the Tutors in the Classroom program) and other tutors;
- grouping of students with similar needs in separate classes and in specialized programs;
- substitution for up to three courses that meet provincial compulsory credit requirements, using other courses in the Ontario secondary curriculum policy documents that meet compulsory credit requirements and that are better suited to a student's individual needs (see OSS, section 3.2, "Substitutions for Compulsory Courses", and appendix 5, "Compulsory Credits"). Locally developed compulsory credit courses are not counted as substitutions;
- the Grade 11 open course Literacy Skills: Reading and Writing (ELS3O), designed to help students prepare for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. This course may be used to meet the additional compulsory credit requirement of "one credit for an additional course in English from the secondary curriculum policy documents for English" (see under group 1 in appendix 5 to OSS);
- enhanced opportunities for work experience, cooperative education programs, or school-work transition programs;
- modified and/or alternative curriculum expectations for students who are receiving special education programs and services;
- adjustment of individual student timetables as appropriate;
- multi-credit broad-based technology courses that lead to apprenticeship or certification programs or that are part of school-work transition programs, and that may be planned for up to 330 hours of scheduled instructional time (see *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Technological Education, 2000*);

Requirements for Locally Developed Courses

- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP) for students who are sixteen years of age or older, and who have completed at least sixteen credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (see *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 2000*);
- single-credit courses and multiple-credit packages that may be offered in interdisciplinary studies (see *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Interdisciplinary Studies, 2002*).

School boards may develop two kinds of courses locally: compulsory credit courses and optional credit courses. Considerations and requirements particular to each of the two kinds of courses are outlined on pages 5 and 6. The following requirements and conditions apply to all locally developed courses:

- The course content, teaching strategies, and assessment and evaluation procedures connected with any locally developed course must accord with current ministry policy, as outlined in OSS; *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment, 2000*; and other ministry policy documents as well as current policy/program memoranda.
- Because locally developed courses are intended to meet needs that are not met by courses provided in the curriculum policy documents, locally developed courses must not duplicate the provincial curriculum. A small degree of overlap between locally developed and provincial courses may be unavoidable, but locally developed courses that contain a significant number of expectations that already exist in a provincial course will not be approved. Also, a course that differs from a provincial course only in its method of delivery, or in that it adds material to enrich the provincial curriculum expectations, will not receive ministry approval as a locally developed course.
- All locally developed courses must lead to courses outlined in the secondary curriculum policy documents and/or be part of a specialized program that provides a particular curriculum focus to assist students in meeting

the diploma requirements and in making the transition to a postsecondary destination. Specialized programs are generally offered to students in Grades 11 and 12. In some instances, specialized programs may begin in Grade 10 (e.g., school-work transition programs). A specialized program may be composed of a combination of courses outlined in the secondary curriculum policy documents and locally developed courses (see OSS, section 7.4, "Specialized Programs").

- Ministry approval of locally developed courses will be valid for *three* years.

COMPULSORY CREDIT COURSES

Locally developed compulsory credit courses are intended for students who require a measure of flexibility and support in order to meet the compulsory credit requirements in English, mathematics, and science for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma or Ontario Secondary School Certificate. Locally developed compulsory credit courses must prepare students for further study in courses from the curriculum policy documents for these disciplines.

Some students who enter secondary school do not have the necessary preparation to enable them to succeed in the secondary program. In order to provide students with the opportunity to upgrade their knowledge and skills, a school board may develop locally one course in English, one course in mathematics, and one course in science that can be counted as meeting a compulsory credit requirement in that discipline. These courses may review and reinforce the elementary curriculum expectations essential to the development of a stronger foundation in the knowledge and skills necessary for further study in the disciplines at the secondary level. Upon successful completion of a Grade 9 locally developed compulsory credit course, some students may proceed to a Grade 9 academic or applied course. Others may proceed to a Grade 10

locally developed optional credit course, which would provide a "stepping stone" from the Grade 9 locally developed compulsory credit course to the Grade 11 workplace preparation course in that discipline. Boards should note that the Grade 9 locally developed compulsory credit course and the Grade 10 locally developed optional credit course in each of English, mathematics, and science may be scheduled for 110 or 220 hours of class time. *All such 220-hour courses will be counted as single-credit courses for the purpose of reporting student achievement.* Boards, however, will be allowed to count these 220-hour locally developed single-credit courses as two credits for the purpose of calculating the average number of credits per pupil under the Special Assistance for Average Per-Pupil Credit Load component of the Teacher Qualifications and Experience Grant.

The requirements and conditions associated with locally developed compulsory credit courses are as follows:

- A school board may develop locally one course in English, one course in mathematics, and one course in science that can be counted as meeting a compulsory credit requirement in that discipline.
- Locally developed courses may not be counted as compulsory credits or replace any compulsory credit courses in disciplines other than those specified above.
- A student may count no more than three such locally developed courses – one each in English, mathematics, and science – as compulsory credits. These credits are not considered to be substitutions (see OSS, section 3.2, "Substitutions for Compulsory Courses").
- Locally developed compulsory credit courses will not have a specific course type designation.
- Locally developed compulsory credit courses may be full- or half-credit courses. A locally developed compulsory credit course that has been developed by a board and approved by

the ministry as a full-credit course (110 hours) may be delivered as two half-credit courses (55 hours each) as long as the conditions for half-credit courses specified in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment, 2000* are met.

OPTIONAL CREDIT COURSES

Optional credit courses are intended to meet the educational needs and/or career preparation needs of students that are not met by the provincial courses.

The requirements and conditions associated with locally developed optional credit courses are as follows:

- Courses that can be counted as optional credits may be developed locally in any grade and in any discipline. The expectations in locally developed optional credit courses must be appropriate for the subject, course type, and grade level.
- Inspected private schools may develop up to four optional credit courses in religious education (see OSS, section 7.1.3.2, "Inspected Private Schools").
- Locally developed optional credit courses must have a specific course type designation (i.e., applied, academic, university preparation, university/college preparation, college preparation, workplace preparation, or open), and must be developed in accordance with ministry policy relating to course types, as outlined in OSS, chapter 4, and in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment, 2000*.
- Grade 12 university, university/college, and college preparation locally developed optional credit courses must be full-credit courses (110 hours), and may not be delivered as half-credit courses.
- Grade 12 workplace preparation and open locally developed optional credit courses, and locally developed optional credit courses for Grades 9 to 11 in any course type, may be either full- or half-credit courses. A course in this group that has been developed by a board and approved by the ministry as a full-credit course may be delivered as two half-credit courses (55 hours each) as long as the conditions for half-credit courses specified in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment, 2000* are met.
- Destination-related courses in Grades 11 and 12 (i.e., university, university/college, college, or workplace preparation courses) must be developed in consultation with the appropriate postsecondary partners (i.e., universities, colleges, trade associations, or workplaces).

Procedures for Local Development of Optional Credit Courses

GRADE 11 AND 12 DESTINATION-RELATED COURSES

As stated above, destination-related locally developed optional credit courses in Grades 11 and 12 must be developed in consultation with the appropriate postsecondary partner(s). On the Request for Approval form (see appendix A), the ministry requires the signature of a representative of the postsecondary partner that was consulted in the development of the course indicating that the postsecondary partner recognizes the appropriateness of the content of the course for the destination. The signing authorities for the participating institutions or organizations for the four types of Grade 11 and 12 destination-related courses are as follows:

- university preparation courses – the academic vice-president of any Ontario university
- university/college preparation courses – the academic vice-president of any Ontario university *and* the academic vice-president of any Ontario college of applied arts and technology
- college preparation courses – the academic vice-president of any Ontario college of applied arts and technology
- workplace preparation courses – a representative of a local employer, a provincial or regional trade association, or a business/industry organization or council

If the course has been developed in consultation with several postsecondary partners, the Request for Approval form must be signed by the representative of at least one participating institution or organization from each category of institution or organization appropriate for the course (e.g., university, college, trade association).

School boards are responsible for establishing the procedures by which representatives of Ontario universities, colleges, and employing organizations are consulted in the local development of an optional credit course. It is strongly suggested that the appropriate supervisory officer of a school board contact the official of each participating institution or organization who has signing authority, before the board begins to develop such a course.

GRADE 9 AND 10 COURSES AND GRADE 11 AND 12 OPEN COURSES

Locally developed optional credit courses for Grades 9 and 10 and locally developed optional credit open courses for Grades 11 and 12 do not require specific consultation or signatures. However, if community and/or postsecondary partners were involved in the development of the course, a representative of each partner consulted should sign the Request for Approval form.

Submission for First-Time Approval

School boards applying for first-time approval of a locally developed credit course must complete a Request for Approval form (see appendix A), and provide the following information in a submission attached to the form:

1. **Rationale for the course.** Describe the educational and/or career preparation needs of the students for whom the course is intended. Describe also the type of needs assessment that was conducted in order to identify the needs. Explain how the provincial courses in the discipline do not meet those needs.
2. **Origin of the course.** If the course is based on an existing course, identify the origin of the course. School boards wishing to use a course developed by another board or developer are responsible for obtaining clearance of copyright and permission to use and/or adapt learning resources and course-related materials developed by others. They must also provide the ministry with the supporting documentation indicating that the board or other developer has given permission to use or adapt the course.
3. **Involvement of postsecondary/community partners.** For a Grade 11 or 12 destination-related course, describe in detail how the postsecondary or community partners were involved in the development of the course. A representative of at least one participating partner from each category of partner involved (e.g., university, college, business association) must sign the Request for Approval form, in the space provided for that purpose, or provide a letter indicating recognition that the course content is appropriate. (See the preceding section on "Procedures for Local Development of Optional Credit Courses".)

Community and/or postsecondary partners may also be involved in the local development of any other types of courses in Grades 9 to 12. Briefly describe the nature of their involvement. Representatives of these partners should also sign the Request for Approval form, or provide a letter indicating recognition that the course content is appropriate.

4. **Links to other courses.** Indicate any prerequisites and/or co-requisites for the locally developed course, and identify the subsequent course(s) or postsecondary program(s) that students will be prepared to take after successfully completing the locally developed course. Also, describe the links to other courses and the possible "pathway". All courses in a given pathway should demonstrate a clear progression from one grade level to the next. If the local course is a component of a specialized program, describe the program in full, showing the placement of the proposed locally developed course in relation to previous, concurrent, and subsequent courses. Indicate also whether the program will contain other locally developed courses that will be submitted in the future.
5. **Course description.** Provide the exact course title, grade, course type (for optional credit courses only), and credit value of the course, followed by the course description. The course description must provide information on course content in a clear and concise way, and must follow the format used for course descriptions in the provincial curriculum policy documents. It should provide sufficient information to enable students and their parents to make appropriate course selections.

6. **Curriculum expectations.** Provide the curriculum expectations for the course. The knowledge and skills that students will acquire by the end of the course must be expressed as overall and specific expectations, organized by strands, and presented in the format used for courses in the provincial curriculum policy documents. Each of the specific expectations must be related to an overall expectation. The specific expectations should be organized in groups under headings that adequately describe the focus of each group of expectations. The expectations should be appropriate for the grade level, course type, and credit value. They must also be free from bias.

School boards are encouraged to use the strands provided in the provincial curriculum policy document for the discipline, unless those strands are not appropriate for the content of the course. If new strands are used, the strand titles should represent logical divisions of the course content.

7. **Curriculum overlap.** Identify, by underlining or highlighting, any expectations in the locally developed course that are the same as or very similar to the expectations of a course in a provincial curriculum policy document. The provincial course from which each overlapping expectation was taken should be specified.

8. **Assessment and evaluation of student achievement.** The achievement chart from the provincial curriculum policy document for the discipline will be used in assessing and evaluating students' achievement in the locally developed course. The course content should therefore include knowledge and skills for all of the categories of the provincial achievement chart. Final grades will be determined as described in the section "Reporting Student Achievement" in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment, 2000*.

Since there is no provincial curriculum policy document for religious education, inspected private schools must develop their own achievement chart for their religious education courses. The chart must contain the four categories – Knowledge/Understanding, Thinking/Inquiry, Communication, Application – and the four levels of achievement that are used in the achievement charts in the provincial curriculum policy documents.

Include in the submission a copy of the achievement chart from the provincial curriculum policy document for the discipline or the new achievement chart for religious education.

9. **Textbooks and resources.** List the textbooks, learning resources, and reference materials to be used in connection with the course.

Submission for Re-approval

Ministry approval for a locally developed course is valid for *three* years. An approved locally developed credit course that duplicates the provincial curriculum as a result of revision of the provincial curriculum will not be re-approved. Boards are expected to conduct a review of student achievement in the course through an analysis of student achievement data and to review with teachers and students the effectiveness of the course.

To re-apply, boards must submit the Request for Re-approval form for a locally developed credit course (see appendix B), along with the following attachments:

1. A copy of the ministry's prior approval of the course and a copy of the original approved course.
2. A report on the board's most recent review of the course, signed by the appropriate supervisory officer (for a school board, school authority, or Provincial School) or the principal (for an inspected private school). The report should include the following information:
 - a description of the review process used
 - strengths of the course in meeting the identified needs of the students, and areas for improvement
 - action taken to improve student achievement
3. The following statistical data on student achievement for the most recent full school year:
 - the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the course
 - the number of students who passed the course
 - the number of students who did not successfully complete the course, and the next steps for these students (e.g., the student will repeat the course)
4. If revisions to the course are proposed, an explanation of the reasons for the revisions and a copy of the revised course with the revisions highlighted. If significant revisions to the course are proposed, the course will be reviewed as a first-time submission, and the request for approval must include all the components of the original submission and must be co-signed by the postsecondary and/or community partners who participated in the development of the original submission.

The Approval Process

In 2004, for approval of all new locally developed courses, boards must submit their requests according to the following schedule:

- by March 31, 2004, for courses to be implemented in the 2004–05 school year
- by September 30, 2004, for courses to be implemented in the 2005–06 school year

Approval will be extended for all locally developed courses (that is, both compulsory and optional credit courses) for which boards were to submit their requests for re-approval by March 31, 2004, and September 30, 2004. Boards must submit their requests for re-approval of these courses by March 31, 2005.

Beginning in 2005, for approval *or* for re-approval of all locally developed courses, boards must submit their requests by March 31.

Note that, beginning in 2005, receipt of requests submitted for approval or re-approval will be acknowledged by the end of April, and school boards will be notified of the status of the review of their submission no later than six months after the deadline for submission.

All requests for approval or re-approval of locally developed courses must be sent to the appropriate ministry district office (see appendix C).

Staff of the ministry will review the proposed courses for rationale; links to provincial curriculum or specialized programs; conformity to OSS program policies and curriculum policies; overlap with provincial curriculum; and appropriateness of the course content for the grade, course type, and credit value.

For locally developed courses approved for the first time, the ministry will provide the appropriate course code in the notification of approval.

Requirements After the Course Has Been Approved

When the course is approved by the ministry, the course description must be included in the school's course calendar. Any prerequisites or co-requisites, as well as the subsequent course(s) or postsecondary program(s) for which the course prepares students, should be identified in a line following the course description. If the ministry approves a locally developed credit course, the school board may consider that course to be an authorized prerequisite for the provincial course for which it prepares students.

Principals of schools will retain on file up-to-date copies of the outlines of courses of study for any ministry-approved locally developed courses offered at the school. The course outlines for locally developed courses will include the same components as those required for provincial courses (see OSS, section 7.1.1, "Courses of Study").

School boards are responsible for conducting annual reviews of all ministry-approved locally developed credit courses offered in their schools, and for submitting these courses for re-approval to the ministry every three years by the deadline for submission specified in "The Approval Process" section. Offering a course before it is approved may prevent students from receiving credit on completion of the course.

For all ministry-approved locally developed courses, school boards will maintain:

- records of the ministry's approval of the courses;
- records of reviews of the courses by the school board;
- evidence of how effectively the courses meet students' educational needs and/or career preparation needs.

CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Required Components of a Submission for Initial Approval of a Course

- rationale for the course
- information on the origin of the course and permission to use/adapt the course, if applicable
- account of the involvement of postsecondary/community partners
- information about links to other courses, including possible pathway (i.e., preceding, concurrent, and subsequent courses)
- course description
- curriculum expectations (course content)
- identification of any expectations that overlap with those in the provincial curriculum
- copy of the achievement chart for the discipline
- list of textbooks, learning resources

SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORIZATION

Official Authorizing the Request

Print Name and Title (supervisory officer for school boards, school authorities, and Provincial Schools; principal for inspected private schools)

I certify that the curriculum expectations of the courses in the ministry's provincial curriculum policy document for the discipline do not meet the needs of the students for whom this course is intended.

Signature of Authorizing Official

Year				Month		Day	

PARTICIPATING POSTSECONDARY/COMMUNITY PARTNER(S) (if applicable)

Sign below or attach letter.

Name of Institution/Organization/Employer

Name and Title of Representative

Print Name and Title (academic vice-president for universities and colleges; employer or trade association representative for workplace)

I recognize that the content of the course is appropriate for the destination.

Signature of Official Representative

Year				Month		Day	

Appendix B: Request for Re-approval of a Locally Developed Course

Note: The completed form, with the attached submission as specified in this guide, must be forwarded to the appropriate district office of the Ministry of Education.

SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION	
Name of School Board/Authority, Provincial School, or Inspected Private School	
Address:	
Telephone: _____ Fax: _____	
E-mail: _____	

COURSE INFORMATION	
Course Title	Course Code
<input type="checkbox"/> Compulsory Credit Course	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Science	Grade: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Optional Credit Course	Grade: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12
Course Type _____	
Discipline/Subject Area _____	
<small>(Ministry's curriculum policy document / Religious education for private schools)</small>	
Scheduled Hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 110 <input type="checkbox"/> 55 <input type="checkbox"/> Other* (specify) _____
Credit Value	<input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 0.50 <input type="checkbox"/> Other* (specify) _____
Date of Initial/Prior Approval	
Year	Month Day
_ _ _ _	_ _ _ _
<p>* Courses in technological education, broad-based technology, may be developed for up to 330 hours, or 3 credits, upon meeting the criteria outlined in <i>The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Technological Education, 2000</i>.</p> <p>Grade 9 locally developed compulsory single-credit courses and Grade 10 locally developed optional single-credit courses in English, mathematics, and science may be scheduled for 110 or 220 hours of class time.</p>	

CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Required Components of a Submission for Re-approval of a Course

- copy of the ministry's prior approval of the course
- copy of original approved course
- report on the board's most recent review of the course
- if revisions are proposed, copy of revised course with the revisions highlighted and explained
- statistical data on student achievement

SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORIZATION

Official Authorizing the Request

Print Name and Title (supervisory officer for school boards, school authorities, and Provincial Schools; principal for inspected private schools)

I certify that the curriculum expectations of the courses in the ministry's provincial curriculum policy document for the discipline do not meet the needs of the students for whom this course is intended.

Year				Month			Day	

Signature of Authorizing Official

PARTICIPATING POSTSECONDARY/COMMUNITY PARTNER(S) (if applicable)

If the course has been significantly revised, the original postsecondary/community partner(s) must sign below or attach a letter.

Name of Institution/Organization/Employer

Name and Title of Representative

Print Name and Title (academic vice-president for universities and colleges; employer or trade association representative for workplace)

I recognize that the content of the course is appropriate for the destination.

Year				Month			Day	

Signature of Official Representative

Appendix C: Ministry of Education District Offices

Barrie District Office

20 Rose Street, 2nd Floor
Barrie ON L4M 2T2

Telephone: 705-725-7627
Toll Free: 800-471-0713
Fax: 705-725-7635
Toll-Free Fax: 800-471-2584

London District Office

217 York Street, Suite 207
London ON N6A 5P9

Telephone: 519-667-1440
Toll Free: 800-265-4221
Fax: 519-667-9769

North Bay/Sudbury District Office

447 McKeown Avenue, Suite 211
North Bay ON P1B 9S9

Telephone: 705-474-7210
Toll Free: 800-461-9570
Fax: 705-497-6896 (North Bay)

Ottawa District Office

1580 Merivale Road, Suite 504
Nepean ON K2G 4B5

Telephone: 613-225-9210
Toll Free: 800-267-1067
Fax: 613-225-2881

Thunder Bay District Office

435 James Street South, Suite 336
Thunder Bay ON P7E 6S9

Telephone: 807-475-1571
Toll Free: 800-465-5020
Fax: 807-475-1550

Toronto and Area District Office

880 Bay Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1N3

Telephone: 416-325-6870 or 416-325-6874
Toll Free: 800-268-5755
Fax: 416-325-4153



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