

 <b>DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY</b>  <b>Challenge for Credit Policy</b>	<i>Policy Sponsor: Senate</i>	<i>Approval Date:</i> September 25, 2017 Effective Immediately
	<i>Responsible Unit: Faculties and Registrar's Office</i>	<i>Revisions:</i>

**A. Background & Purpose**

Challenge for credit is one means by which the university may assess and attach specific value to a student's prior experiential learning outside of the university environment

The challenge for credit process provides academic, course-level credit for students' prior learning when that learning is not eligible for consideration as a transfer credit. Challenge for credit relates to learning that overlaps with the stated learning outcomes of existing courses at Dalhousie.

The principles underlying this Challenge for Credit Policy include:

- challenge for credit should be used to assess students' competences and not as a means to manage enrolment;
- students should not be academically disadvantaged for an unsuccessful challenge for credit attempt if both the student and Dalhousie have reasonable grounds to believe that a challenge assessment could be successful;
- challenge for credit neither replaces an existing assessment of a student's knowledge in a topic nor provides an alternative to the grade reassessment process; and
- participation in challenge for credit by Faculties will be their choice.

**B. Application**

This policy defines conditions for, and governs the processes for, challenge for credit of Dalhousie credit courses. Each Faculty may opt to allow for challenge for credit for none, some, or all of its courses.

In this policy, cross-listed courses shall be considered as a single course when considering a challenge.

**C. Definitions**

**Academic Unit:** An academic department, Faculty, school, college, or otherwise, that offers a course as part of a credit, technical, undergraduate, or graduate program at the university.

**D. Policy**

1. Dalhousie University permits a challenge for credit process to be implemented by Faculties.
2. Students who are currently enrolled at Dalhousie and in good standing in an undergraduate degree program at the university are eligible to challenge courses for credit.
3. Each Faculty decides which, if any, of its courses can be challenged for credit by registered students. Program accreditation requirements may constrain which courses may be challenged.
4. When a course can be challenged, the Faculty indicates whether the challenge results in a letter grade for the course or a pass/fail grade.
5. Students planning to challenge for credit will be provided with the course syllabus.
6. The ability to challenge a course in a Faculty shall be available to all students regardless of the degree or major of the student.
7. A student may only challenge a given course once.
8. Challenge for credit cannot be used to replace a transfer credit assessment for course credit from another institution.
9. A student may count a maximum of 15 credit hours of challenge for credit recognition toward their degree requirements. Faculties may add additional constraints on the number of allowed credit hours by challenge for credit in their programs.
10. A student wishing to challenge a course may not have received an alternative assessment for the course credit being sought such as a transfer credit assessment, a registration in the course at Dalhousie or another university, or an unsuccessful exemption request for the course. Also, a student who completes a course at Dalhousie may not subsequently challenge its prerequisites for credit.

The university shall not accept challenge credits from other institutions on letter of permission or transfer credit when that student's transcript from the other institution identifies a course as passed through challenge for credit.

## E. Administrative Structure

1. Authority: This policy falls under the authority of Senate. It is administered by the Registrar's Office in consultation with the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.
2. Record-keeping: The record keeping pertaining to this policy will be the responsibility of the Registrar's Office.
3. Areas of responsibility:
  - a. The Registrar's Office is responsible for
    - Maintaining a list of all courses at the university that are available for challenge;
    - Recording the positive outcomes of challenge attempts by each student on the students' academic transcripts; and
    - Ensuring a student does not exceed the maximum number of challenge credits allowed in its verification of graduation requirements.
  - b. Each Faculty, with its Academic Units, is responsible for
    - Establishing and publishing the frequency with which courses in the Faculty can be added to or removed from the list of courses available for challenge;
    - Determining a list of courses that the Faculty allows to be challenged and keeping the Registrar's Office apprised of the current list of courses;
    - Providing information to students on the content of the course to be challenged and on assessment procedures;
    - Publishing dates by which requests for challenge for credit must be submitted for courses in the Faculty;
    - Resolving each request for a challenge for credit in a timely manner to meet the timelines in this policy;
    - Administering the challenge assessments for courses in the Faculty in accordance with all Dalhousie grading practices to meet the timelines in this policy and with reasonable accommodation for the students' schedules;
    - Monitoring the quality and integrity of the assessments as it would for any other course in the Academic Unit; and
    - Reporting assessment results to the Registrar's Office.
  - c. Students are responsible for
    - Requesting the challenge for credit in a timely manner;
    - Demonstrating reasonable grounds on why the challenge for credit has a chance to succeed to the Academic Unit;
    - Making themselves available for the challenge for credit assessment set by the Academic Unit; and
    - Paying the testing fees for the challenge for credit.

## **F. Procedures**

### Approval for challenge

The Head of an Academic Unit, or their designate, that offers the course to be challenged must ascertain if the student has demonstrated reasonable grounds for requesting a challenge before allowing the student to challenge a course for credit. Reasonable grounds include prior work or study or life experience such as volunteer work, training programs, or independent study. It may also include advanced studies in high school that are not eligible for transfer credit.

### Notations

If a course challenge for credit is successful, the Registrar's Office will record the course name and number, a notation that the course was achieved through challenge for credit, a grade or a notation of pass, and the number of credit hours awarded on the student's transcript.

If a course challenge for credit is not successful, there will be no notation recorded on the student's academic transcript.

### Testing requirements

Faculties will ensure that challenge for credit assessments meet the same level of assessment responsibility and accountability as its regular courses, including any preservation of material for grade reassessment.

### Timelines

Faculties will determine and make available dates by which a student who wishes to challenge a course for credit must make their request. Those dates must allow the Academic Units in the Faculties to approve or deny the requests by the end of the first week of classes in the academic term. The Academic Units must then arrange for the challenge for credit assessment to be completed and graded by the last day to add a course in the same academic term.

### Testing fees

The university shall charge a testing fee for challenge for credit assessments. The testing fee shall be set by Dalhousie and shall be charged to the student prior to the challenge for credit assessment.

### Appeals

The challenge for credit assessment can be appealed by the student according to the university's and Faculties' regulations on grade reassessment.

### Residency

Credit hours granted through challenge for credit will not count as Dalhousie courses when assessing residency elements such as

- program residency requirements,
- fulfillment of full-time status,
- the credit hours to accumulate before having academic standing assessed,
- the evaluation of student loans or scholarships; and
- any other measure of work completed in the academic term.