

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS
Information for Students and
Parents/Guardians



May 2013

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Beginning in September 2012, high school students who have gained personal development credits from providers approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development can have these credits recognized on their high school transcripts. One of the student’s five **elective credits** required for graduation can be a personal development credit, but the student can also have additional personal development credits recorded on his/her transcript as extra credits beyond the thirteen mandatory and five elective credits required for graduation.

In this guide you will find everything you need to know about Personal Development Credits— what they are, how you can request to have a personal development credit recorded on your high school transcript, and how you can get in touch with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development if you have questions about credits or approved course and program providers.

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What are Personal Development Credits?

A credit is awarded when a person achieves all of the requirements in an area of training or learning. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Personal Development Credit was designed to recognize the achievements of students who successfully complete courses or meet all of the assessment standards of organizations that are external to the high school system.

Under the new policy, personal development credits can be completed in three areas:

1. Arts
2. Languages
3. Leadership

Credits will be recognized as long as they are awarded by a group or organization that is recognized by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as a Course or Program Provider. In recognizing an organization, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development ensures that the courses or programs offered are high quality, support provincial *Principles of Learning*, do not duplicate courses that are part of the public school program for Nova Scotia high schools, and allow students to work toward achieving Nova Scotia's *Essential Graduation Learnings* (EGLs).

Students in grade ten, eleven or twelve may have a personal development credit recognized on their high school transcript when they are able to provide evidence of successfully completing a recognized course or program to a guidance counsellor or administrator at their school. The policy also allows students, who have earned a personal development credit while attending junior high school, to apply to have the credit recognized as a grade 10, 11, or 12 elective credit.

Depending on the curriculum or assessment criteria (i.e. what students will know and be able to do when they have earned a credential), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will determine if a personal development credit qualifies as a grade 10, 11, or 12 credit. Based on the time involved in earning the credit, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will also decide if the credit qualifies as a half or full credit.

The Different Types of Personal Development Credits

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's policy recognizes personal development credits in three learning areas—arts, leadership, and languages. In all cases, approved credits are different from courses taught in Nova Scotia's high schools.

Before submitting a Student Notification Form to their guidance counsellor or administrator at their school, students are encouraged to check the **Approved Provider and Course List for 2012–2013** at https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/final_approved_provider_and_course_list_december_2012_0.pdf and the **Approved Provider and Course List for 2013–2014** at https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/final_complete_approved_provider_and_course_list_may_2013.pdf.

1. Arts

If you achieved a high level of skill in community-based music, dance, or visual arts programs, you may be eligible to have a personal development credit recognized on your high school transcript. There are two types of credits that apply to the arts:

- a. Some students gain a high level of skills through courses and private tutoring and then complete a final exam through an organization such as the Royal Conservatory of Music to gain a final credit.
- b. Students can also meet all of the requirements of a community-based arts course or program and receive a credit in recognition of their achievements if the course or program provider has been approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

2. Languages

If you can demonstrate strong speaking and writing skills in a language other than English, French, Gaelic, German, Mi'kmaw, Latin or Spanish, you can have a personal development credit in language recognized on your high school transcript.

- a. If you have learned a new language in a course or program that has been approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and received a certificate verifying that you have achieved an acceptable level of oral and written skills in this language, you can have this credential recognized as a personal development credit on your high school transcript.

3. Leadership

There are excellent opportunities for students to develop leadership skills in programs across the province. These programs range from community leadership, entrepreneurship, sport leadership, and environmental and agricultural stewardship, just to name a few. At the centre of leadership courses or programs approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is a commitment to personal and community development in high quality learning experiences that capture students' interests and aspirations.

Personal Development Credits and Program Planning for High School Students

High school students who have successfully earned a personal development credit through an approved course or program provider can have their credit(s) recognized in two ways:

1. A half or full personal development credit can be applied to meeting the requirements of the five elective credits that all students require for graduation.
2. A half or full personal development credit may also appear as an additional credit on a student's high school transcript, further to the thirteen mandatory and five elective credits required for graduation.

Students who have or plan to pursue personal development credits are encouraged to discuss their options as part of the high school program planning process.

I Have a Personal Development Credit, Now What?

Students apply to have a personal development credit recorded on their high school transcript **after** they have completed all of the requirements for the arts, language or leadership course or program and received an official certificate or letter of completion. To have your credit recognized on your high school transcript as a personal development credit, follow these steps:

1. Talk with your guidance counsellor about the process. Make sure to find out about the deadlines that have been set by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for submitting the *Student Notification Form*, especially if you will be graduating this year. **It is your**

responsibility to make sure all of the documents have been provided to your school on or before the deadline.

2. Check the “Approved Providers List” on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Personal Development Credit website to make sure the provider you have completed a course or program through is approved. On this site you will also be able to find out if the course you completed is eligible for a grade 10, 11, or 12 elective credit and if it is considered as a half or full credit. **Schools cannot grant credits for courses or programs from providers that have not been approved.**
3. Complete the Student Information section (Section A) of the *Student Notification Form*.
4. Attach the certificate or letter of completion that verifies you have successfully completed all the course requirements to the *Student Notification Form*.
5. Take the completed form and appropriate document to your guidance counsellor or the staff person at your school that has been designated to process applications.

Note: If the document (certificate or letter of completion) you have attached to verify that you have received a credit is not the right one, it is your responsibility to contact the organization where you completed the course or program to get the appropriate document.

Personal Development Credit Student Notification Form

Please complete and submit this form *after* you have completed all of the requirements for a personal development credit. To download an electronic version of this form please go to <http://pdc.ednet.ns.ca>.

A personal development credit cannot be entered on your transcript unless this form is accompanied by the appropriate certificate or letter provided to you by the course or program provider. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they provide a copy of the certificate or letter of completion prior to the deadline.

Student Information

Student Name _____

Student ID Number _____ Grade _____

Current School _____

1. This personal development credit has been recorded as a credit toward the five elective credits required for graduation _____

OR

2. This personal development credit has been recorded on the transcript as a credit beyond the 5 elective credits required for graduation _____

Signatures

Student Name (please print)

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Organization _____

Name of Credit or Course Title: _____

A final certificate or letter of completion has been provided by the student. _____ (Yes/No)

School Record *(To be completed by the School Official)*

School Official's Name (please print)

School Official's Signature

Date

Questions and Answers

For Service Providers

Q. What is the purpose of the Personal Development Credit?

A. One of the province's goals for education in the *Kids and Learning First* plan is to prepare young people for good jobs and citizenship in their communities. The Personal Development Credit provides another way to encourage students to gain valuable life skills and experiences beyond the classroom, strengthening their connections with their communities.

Q. How does the credit work?

A. Students who successfully complete a course or program approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will earn a full or half credit to be included on their transcript.

Q: How does an organization apply to offer the credit?

A. Full criteria and applications are posted on the EDnet website at <http://pdc.ednet.ns.ca>

Q: Which organizations are currently approved?

A: The course/program providers are: Cadet Programs, Junior Achievement, 4-H and Dance Nova Scotia (they are the initial four), plus, Cadance Academy, Gymnastics Nova Scotia, Italian Language School, Lifesaving Society of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Equestrian Federation, Nova Scotia Registered Music Teachers' Association, Nova Scotia Scouts Canada and Skate Canada Nova Scotia. We expect the program will continue to expand. You can check the approved courses by visiting the **Approved Provider and Course List for 2012–2013** at https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/final_approved_provider_and_course_list_december_2012_0.pdf and the **Approved Provider and Course List for 2013–2014** at https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/final_complete_approved_provider_and_course_list_may_2013.pdf.

Q. If I don't apply now, can my organization apply in the future to be included?

A. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development plans to review applications every two years. So the next application cycle will be in 2014–15, with course providers to be added in the 2015–16 school year.

For Parents and Students

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provides another way to encourage students to gain valuable life skills and experiences beyond the classroom, strengthening their connections with their communities.

Q. How does the credit work?

A. Students who successfully complete a course or program approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will earn a full or half-credit to be included on their transcript. This may count as one of the five elective credits that students require for graduation. The student can also have additional personal development credits recorded on his/her transcript as extra credits beyond the thirteen mandatory and five elective credits required for graduation.

Q. Which programs are eligible?

A. In 2013–2014, students can earn the credit for taking part in approved programs within Cadance Academy, Canadian Cadet Organizations, Dance Nova Scotia, Gymnastics Nova Scotia, Junior Achievement, Italian Language School, Lifesaving Society of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia 4-H Program, Nova Scotia Equestrian Federation, Nova Scotia Registered Music Teachers Association, Nova Scotia Scouts Canada, and Skate Canada Nova Scotia. Any eligible program must demonstrate a benefit to students in the area(s) of leadership, the arts, or languages that aren't already offered in schools.

Q. Can students earn more than one credit for participating in different programs?

A: Students can earn only one elective credit towards the 18 credits required for graduation. It can be a Grade 10, 11, or 12 credit, depending on the designation that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development determines. However, they can have more than one credit appear on their transcript.

Q. Can a student get credit for taking part in an approved program before he/she reaches high school?

A. Yes. The credit can be added to his/her transcript any time after the student begins high school, according to school procedures, but not after June 1 of the year the student graduates.

Q. How are students marked in this course?

A. For the Personal Development Credit, students receive a pass on their transcript rather than a numerical grade. They won't see a mark appear on their report card, but the credit will be recognized on their transcript.

Q. How do students take part in the credit? Do they have to submit any paperwork at school before they enrol in a program like Cadets?

A. Students do not have to make arrangements with their school before participating in a program. To receive a credit, students submit their documented proof of successful completion to their guidance counsellor.

Q. Do students have to pay to take part in these credits?

A. One of the requirements for services providers is that they provide options, such as bursaries, to help eliminate any financial barriers for students. But any other costs, such as assessment fees or travel, are the responsibility of the student and his or her parents/guardians. Any financial challenges should be discussed with the service provider.

Q. Where can I learn more about the programs that are approved?

A: More information about the credit is available at <https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca>. Eligible programs will be listed on the site once they are approved.

Q. If I take part in a program that I think should qualify but isn't on the approved list, is there anything I can do?

A. Students cannot earn a Personal Development Credit for a course that isn't on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's approved providers list. The Department will review applications from organizations every two years, and you can encourage the organization where you participated to apply to be part of the credit.