



Nova Scotia School  
for **Adult Learning**  
*Success starts here!*

**Program Guide**  
*for the Nova Scotia*  
**High School Graduation Diploma for Adults**

**ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM (ALP)**

**2007-2008**

  
**NOVA SCOTIA**  
Education  
[www.goNSSAL.ca](http://www.goNSSAL.ca)

**STRENGTH THROUGH**  
**Sk!lls&Learning**

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## **Foreword**

This handbook is produced primarily as a guide for educational institutions funded to deliver the credits for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. It will also assist education and career counsellors outside educational institutions and programs in advising adults who require a high school diploma to meet their educational and career goals.

This handbook is also available on-line on the Department of Education's website at [www.goNSSAL.ca](http://www.goNSSAL.ca) under educator/documents and resources.

Individual paper copies may be requested from Nova Scotia Department of Education, Adult Education Division, Skills & Learning Branch, PO Box 578, Halifax, NS B3J 2S9, Canada.

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**NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL FOR ADULT LEARNING  
(NSSAL)**

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## Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL)

The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) began in November 2000 in response to the recognized need for a continuum of programming to meet the needs of adult students. Although quality adult literacy and upgrading programs for adults existed previously in Nova Scotia, the program delivery system was fragmented. There was a lack of collaboration between delivery agencies and coordination of the various programs offered through community-based organizations, regional school boards, and campuses of the Université Sainte-Anne and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). Some programs were offered through Nova Scotia Academic Upgrading Program, others delivered the Public School Program (PSP), while others prepared students to write the General Educational Development (GED) tests. There was no integration among these programs; therefore, the pathway through the system was not clear to students, education and employment counsellors, employers, post-secondary receiving institutions, and the general public.

Often the learning achieved by adults in programs outside the public school system was not recognized either by post-secondary institutions, by employers, or by the public. In addition, the credits received in the adult system and the public school system were not portable outside their respective systems. This confusion over the various credentials offered in the programs and their limitations in meeting the needs of adults adversely affected the students' personal, economic, social, and cultural lives.

### Goals of the School

#### **Develop and coordinate a system of literacy and adult basic education programs and services to meet the needs of the students.**

The school coordinates the programs and services that are available to adults through a variety of agencies and institutions. The programs of NSSAL are not delivered from one physical location but rather come from multiple

delivery points across Nova Scotia. Each of the delivery partners receives and refers students through the appropriate assessment and counselling services to ensure that they meet their educational goals. Information on the programs and services of the school is available from the regional offices of the Adult Education Division, Department of Education, partner departments such as Community Services and Service Canada, and delivery organizations and programs.

The mandate of the school is to ensure that adults throughout the province have opportunities to obtain the programming they require to meet their needs.

Community-based learning organizations, such as the Community Learning Networks, provide the foundational pieces (Levels I and II) of the Adult Learning Program (ALP). Level III may also be delivered in community-based programs.

NSCC is the primary delivery agency for the ALP, Levels III and IV, and the Université Sainte-Anne for the Études générales Niveau IV.

Regional school boards provide PSP credits that are required by adults to meet the entrance requirements for some community college courses and universities. These may be obtained through adult high schools, alternative schools, evening classes, or distance education courses.

#### **Provide students with a recognized credential that will allow them access to further education, training, and employment.**

The Department has created the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults (NSHSGDA) and its French equivalent, the Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires pour adultes de la Nouvelle-Écosse (DFESANÉ). The diploma was implemented on September 1, 2001.

Delivery of credits, criteria, policies, and principles for the diploma was established by NSSAL.

The diploma requires the completion of 12 credits. All adults 19 years of age or over and out of school for one full year or more who do not have a high school graduation diploma are eligible for the diploma. This includes adults who currently hold an NSCC Academic Upgrading Level IV or a GED certificate.

The Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults is unique because it accepts credits obtained through a number of different educational programs and venues. In recognition of the learning that adults have obtained through their life experiences, a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process is in place. Therefore, students are assessed before beginning their studies to analyse where they have already met the outcomes of the curricula.

### **Increase accessibility to and mobility between programs**

NSSAL provides tuition-free programs for adults. However, institutions may charge fees for registration, medical, and graduation.

The school provides a smooth transition for students from program to program by requiring that all programs deliver outcome-based, standardized curricula that are approved by the department and connected to the public school curricula. There is a standardized placement assessment process for adults entering the programs that the school supports. It provides a matrix of compulsory credits that are accepted toward the diploma and guidelines for the delivery institutions to follow when making decisions about elective credits. There are referral protocols for the transfer of students from one type of program to another. Programs that deliver the credits for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for

Adults and the Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires pour adultes de la Nouvelle-Écosse use a common transcript (see Appendix B).

## **Principles of Adult Learning**

Listed below is a selection of adult learning principles that the Adult Education Division of the Department of Education considers in its policies and practices.<sup>1</sup>

- Adults need to know why they are learning something and how it affects them directly. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance. When they consider it important to acquire a new skill, knowledge, or attitude, they are more ready and willing to engage in the learning process.
- Adults have a lifetime of experiences that should be tapped as a resource for ongoing learning. Adult learners bring various levels of prior exposure to a variety of topics, and this should be acknowledged. Connecting learning to past experience also makes learning more meaningful for adult learners.
- Adults learn more easily using hands-on and task-oriented methods of instruction rather than content-oriented methods. Learning activities should often be in the context of common tasks to be performed. Adults want to apply knowledge and skills immediately. Retention decreases if the learning is applied only at some time in the future.
- Adults have a need to be self-directed and decide for themselves what they want to learn. When possible, instruction should allow learners to discover things for themselves, providing guidance and help when needed. Also, when possible, adult learners should be involved in the process of deciding what and how they learn and also what learning should be assessed and how.

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<sup>1</sup>Principles of adult learning were based on: Knowles, Malcolm Shepherd (1970). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy*, New York Association Press (p. 3).

## **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)**

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process of identifying, assessing, and recognizing what a person knows and can do.

PLAR processes allow individuals to gain recognition for skills, knowledge, and abilities that they have acquired through formal, informal, or experiential learning. This learning may come from any area of life, including work experience, training, independent study, volunteer activities, travel, hobbies, and/or military service. A guiding principle of NSSAL is that adults should not have to repeat previous learning. To that end, prior learning is recognized through various mechanisms that include transfer credits.

Note: Because NSSAL has created a single-entry system, PSP and ALP credits that are applied toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults are not considered transfer credits even though they were obtained in an institution other than the one in which the student is currently enrolled. These credits are recorded as marks on a common transcript and designated as either PSP or ALP.

## **Transfer Credit Information**

### **Types of Transfer Credits**

Transfer credits accepted toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults must meet the criteria established by the Department of Education.

*For credits outside of province*, transcript should be sent to Department of Education for review. In 2007, the department created an on-line transfer credit database. Searching for credit information can be done; however, please contact the department for final confirmation due to information changing on a regular basis.

*For credits outside of Canada*, the person must have their credential reviewed by an international credential association.

The two services used are:

*World Education Services (WES)*  
ph. (866) 343-0070 fax: 416-972-9004  
email: [canada@wes.org](mailto:canada@wes.org)  
website: [www.wes.org/ca](http://www.wes.org/ca)

Applicants need to fill out documentation as instructed on

<http://www.wes.org/ca/required/index.asp>

For country profiles see

<http://www.wes.org/ca/web/ecountrylist.htm>

*International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS)*

ph.no. 519-763-7282 fax 519-763-6964  
email: [info@icascanada.ca](mailto:info@icascanada.ca)  
website: [www.icascanada.ca](http://www.icascanada.ca)

Refer to [www.goNSSAL.ca](http://www.goNSSAL.ca) for other service agents.

### **Compulsory credits**

Six of the 12 credits that must be successfully completed to fulfil the requirements for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults are compulsory. These are specific grade 11 and 12 PSP credits and Level IV ALP credits described on page 11.

### **Elective credits**

Six of the 12 credits that must be successfully completed to fulfil the requirements for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults are electives. These credits may come from a broad selection of courses completed via the PSP, the ALP, other provinces' PSPs and adult basic education programs, post-secondary programs, apprenticeship programs, and vocational and training programs.

### **Transfer Credit Responsibilities of the Delivery Institutions**

- Assess and recommend transfer credits for courses that they deliver. School boards may grant transfer credits only for PSP courses, and NSCC may grant transfer credits only for ALP courses.
- If a student requests a transfer of credit for a course that is not under the mandate of the institution, the student is requested to submit specific documentation that will be reviewed by the Department of Education (see Appendix D – Checklist). The results of the review will be communicated to the student.

### **Transfer Credit Responsibilities of the Department of Education**

- If a student requests a transfer of credit for a course that is not under the mandate of the institution, the Department of Education will evaluate the previous course work and determine the transfer of credit.
- Review and approve the transfer of credits recommended by the delivery institutions that are not listed on the transfer credit database.
- Complete *Transfer of Credit Assessment* form (if necessary) for students who have completed previous course work that will be used to fulfil requirements toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.
- Maintain the transfer of credit database of the courses that have been successfully evaluated by either the department or the delivery institutions.

### **Criteria for Determining Transfer of Credit**

Adults may request credit transfer for formal learning that is not a Nova Scotia grade 11 or 12 PSP credit or an ALP Level IV credit but meets equivalent content and level of learning.

Transfer of credits may be granted for courses if:

- adult has completed the full duration of the course or program and has provided verification of completion.
- course or program completed at an accredited educational institution or a professional organization. For example, universities, community colleges, or registered private career colleges and technical institutes.
- meet at least 80 per cent of the prescribed learning outcomes and are at least at the same level of difficulty as Department of Education’s PSP or ALP courses.
- meet a minimum of 45 to 60 instructional hours for ½ credit and between 90 to 110 hours for 1 credit.
- be at the same level of difficulty as the credit for which equivalency is being evaluated
- satisfy different learning outcomes than those for which credit was previously granted toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults (although courses may share similar outcomes, identical outcomes can be applied only once).
- meet the Department of Education’s standards for assessment and evaluation
- meet the department’s standards for method of testing (for PSP courses see the Public School Programs guide - link: [http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/psp/psp\\_03\\_04\\_full.pdf](http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/psp/psp_03_04_full.pdf)) and for ALP courses see the assessment guide (page 6).

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Adults must provide the institution with an original transcript containing the name of the course and the mark received. If necessary, course name, name of education institution, course outlines, method of testing, length of course, and other relevant documents may be required (see Appendix D).
- Institutions may grant transfer credits only for courses delivered by their institution. Therefore, school boards may grant transfer credits only for PSP credits, and NSCC may consider only previously earned ALP credits.
- Faculty or teachers who are content experts will assess the learning outcomes of the course under consideration.
- Following the assessment of the course, the assessors will inform the registrar, student services personnel, or the principal of the outcome. If the course is deemed to successfully meet the requirements, it will be recorded on the transcript.
- When a course has been assessed and is determined to be equivalent to a PSP or an ALP course, Department of Education will inform all NSSAL partners through updates on transfer credit database.

Adults may also have their educational qualifications assessed directly by the Department of Education for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

## **Challenge for Credit**

Adults who have obtained significant informal learning from life and work may request to challenge the learning outcomes in specific PSP or ALP courses and receive credits toward the diploma.

This process differs significantly in the institutions delivering PSP and ALP credits. Therefore, the challenge for credit process already established by these institutions and programs will be followed.

- The challenge for credit process will be administered by the delivery organization in which the adult is enrolled.
- NSCC will determine the process for challenging ALP credits. A description of this process may be obtained through the student service or registrar's office.
- School boards have a process for challenging PSP credits. A description of this process may be obtained through regional school board offices or high schools.
- A credit awarded through the challenge for credit process will be recorded on a transcript (see page 23 for more information on transcripts).
- Adults may apply directly to the Department of Education for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

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## **PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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## Placement Assessment Policies and Procedures

### Introduction

Adults may complete credits for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults through two different programs, the PSP and the ALP. These two programs are delivered through NSCC, school board adult high schools, or approved community organizations. Adult students applying to enter these programs must be carefully assessed before being placed in an ALP level.

### Why Good Placement Assessment Is Important

#### To ensure that there is a welcoming environment for the adult student

Because many adults who are returning to school may have been out of school for some time or may have had negative educational experiences in the past, they are often nervous. The initial contact between the adult and the educational organization must be positive, because it sets the tone for the ongoing relationship between the organization and the student.

Educational institutions need to eliminate barriers that are under the institutions' control to support students' success.

#### To ensure that the adults are working at a comfortable level

If adults are inappropriately placed, they will not have the required background skills and knowledge. They may experience difficulty in the program and result in dropping out the course or program.

#### To help adults develop realistic goals

Many adults enter programs uncertain of their skills and aptitudes. They may either underestimate or overestimate their skills. Their participation in the placement process may help them better understand their skill levels and their short-term and long-term goals.

#### To determine which learning outcomes in a program have already been completed by the adult

Spending time covering outcomes they have already mastered is detrimental to these adults. The adult learners' time frames for upgrading their skills may be limited by their responsibilities, such as family and work, and by sponsoring agency expectations.

Adults come to programs with a wide variety of skill levels in different subject areas. These skill levels are rarely reflected by the credentials that they hold.

#### To provide a starting point for instruction of the outcomes in the curriculum

The information from the initial assessment can be used to indicate where the adult needs to begin in relation to the outcomes prescribed in a program. However, the teacher will have to conduct additional program-specific academic assessments to inform instruction.

### Characteristics of Good Placement Assessment Practices

All good assessments include the following characteristics:

- They use a variety of assessment tools and strategies.
- They have clear criteria for scoring assessments.
- They provide an opportunity for adults to demonstrate higher-level thinking skills.
- They do not depend on a single score.
- They are bias free and inclusive.
- They are directly related to the learning outcomes of a program of study.
- They require that the adults assume ownership of their own learning.
- They are fair to all adult.

Good assessment recognizes the following:

Learning is complex and has many dimensions. It is not an exact science. No one type of assessment is perfect; therefore, the consequences of any type of assessment must be considered before it is used. For example, does it favour adults with certain learning styles? Does it depend on only one kind of response such as multiple-choice questions? Using more than one type of assessment gives a more holistic view of students and takes into consideration the variety of learning styles that students prefer.

Various parts of the assessment process is as important as the strategies chosen. The first part of the placement assessment process should be an interview, because it may allow the adult and the assessor to establish a comfort level. Due to the negative feelings that many adults have about testing, not administering a test during the adult's first contact with the program is highly recommended.

Criteria for scoring is accurate, unbiased, and consistent. It is important to understand the scoring and the levels of performance associated with the scoring. This is best achieved by using models or examples of students' work that demonstrate a solid understanding of the subject matter that is being assessed.

Demonstrates higher-level thinking skills that can be transferred to other applications. The assessment encourages adults to think not just to regurgitate facts or check alternatives.

Does not look merely at a single statistic or score but includes other forms of describing achievement. It portrays an accurate picture of students' strengths and weaknesses. A numerical or letter grade does not adequately meet these requirements.

Independent of any factors that might be outside the purpose of the assessment. This includes culture, language, gender, socio-economic background, or ethnicity, unless the knowledge falls within the field of the subject being assessed. The task or test question should not favour or discriminate against any person or group of adults by referring to information that is not part of the adults' background or prior knowledge.

Relates to the learning outcomes in a program of study. The assessment must be related to a curriculum. The assessment information collected must clearly show which outcomes the adults has met and what he or she needs to do to complete the learning outcomes in a course.

Requires that the adult assumes ownership for their own learning. Adults must become actively involved in assessing and evaluating their own strengths and needs related to their identified goals.

Requires assessors who are knowledgeable in assessment. Those designing and administering the placement assessment must have preparation and training to have success in proper placement. Teachers who are asked to develop assessments must be well versed in the subject matter and in anti-bias evaluation.

The challenge of placement assessment is

- to develop a picture of the whole person, using a variety of methods.
- to assess in a way that is helpful to
  - the adult (establishing goals).
  - the teacher (know which outcomes the adult has completed).
  - the program (place the adult appropriately in a course or level of study).

## **Placement Assessment for Process Guidelines**

Most organizations conduct some type of assessment of adult learners when they are entering programs. The tools and strategies used may differ from program to program based on the needs of the adults, but all assessments should meet the following criteria:

- Adult learners should be involved in the process as much as possible.
- The process must be comfortable and non-threatening.
- All information collected must be confidential.
- The assessment must be holistic. The process must take into account the whole person, not just academic skills.
- The methods and tools must be relevant to the cultural background and personal experience of the adult learner.
- Communication between adult and staff through the assessment process must be ongoing.

## **Curriculum Learning Outcomes Testing**

### **Intake Assessment for Placement Testing**

Testing is only one part of assessment, but unfortunately, testing has come to mean assessment in some programs. Testing should be only a small facet of any assessment, including placement assessment. The purpose of testing is to provide an efficient means for students to demonstrate which of the learning outcomes in the required courses they have met and which ones they need to accomplish. Since testing is only one evaluation method, the results of testing should provide only one piece of information to the persons completing the assessment and making placement decisions.

## **Standardized Achievement Testing**

Since many adults in literacy/upgrading programs find tests unpleasant, the placement tests must be carefully developed, chosen, administered, and reported. For a number of reasons, research now supports a movement away from standardized testing to informal methods of assessment designed by teachers:

- The test items do not correlate to the curriculum.
- The content of test items and the methodology are biased against certain groups of students.
- The focus is on simpler skills that are easily tested and do not evaluate higher-order thinking skills.
- The tests are often misinterpreted and misused because they are administered and interpreted by unqualified personnel.
- Most standardized tests rely on a multiple-choice format, which encourages guessing.
- They do not consider the life experience of adults.
- The format of multiple-choice timed tests is often associated by adult students with negative past test experiences.
- Grade-equivalent scoring is not very precise. They are only rough guides and can therefore not be used as benchmarks for screening.

### **Skill Level versus Educational Credentials**

Added to the complexity of assessment for placement testing is the likelihood that students may demonstrate skill levels that do not correlate to their credentials. This is most often true for adults who have been out of school for some time. These adults may need to take preparatory or foundational level courses even though the graduation requirements of the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults do not demand it. The results of the placement testing will determine if these preparatory programs are necessary. Adults need complete only the required missing outcomes rather than a complete program of study, as they do not need the courses for credit.

Since any testing method is unreliable to some degree, adults' program placement may not be appropriate. Although moving students from one level to another after instruction has begun can be upsetting to some students, this is a reasonable option and should be discussed up front with the student. Teachers should be able to determine within a few weeks if any of their students have not been appropriately placed. Adults should be made aware from the beginning of the program that the placement may be temporary and changes may occur.

### **The Interview Process**

The purpose of the interview is to help the adult feel at ease about returning to school and to provide a comfortable method to gather information about the adult's previous experiences, education, and goals. It is important to assure the adult that all information collected is confidential.

A good interview process requires time, but in the long term is cost effective because it promotes individual student success. Since the needs of adults participating in an interview may vary, not all adults should have to go through an identical process. Adults who require a few credits to get the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults may require only a short initial interview. Other adults may need to go through a series of interviews before the assessor has enough information to make an appropriate placement and programming decision. The interview process should be flexible and provide adults with the opportunity to enter and exit the process based on their individual needs.

The first meeting with the adult should be seen as the initial step in the ongoing process of information gathering, collaboration, goal setting, assessment, and redirection. The initial interview should take place in a quiet, private space that has adequate lighting, heating, and ventilation. The atmosphere should be relaxed, and the interviewer must be supportive.

The interview should be a dialogue rather than a question-and-answer session. The dialogue may be based on the questions on a questionnaire with the necessary information recorded. The adult must feel that the process is comfortable and non-threatening.

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**NOVA SCOTIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION DIPLOMA FOR ADULTS  
(NSHSGDA)**

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## Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults (NSHSGDA)

### Requirements for the Diploma

#### Who is Eligible?

Adults who are enrolled at delivery institutions or who apply directly to the Department of Education for the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults/Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires pour adultes de la Nouvelle-Écosse

Must be 19 years of age or over and out of public school for one full year or more; the Department of Education must approve exceptions.

Must be a resident of Nova Scotia. Military personnel should contact Department of Education.

Must not have a recognized high school diploma as defined by the Department of Education.

*Note:* Adults who have high school equivalency certificates such as the GED certificate, an Academic Upgrading Level IV Certificate, or a Nova Scotia Vocational Education Certificate are eligible to obtain the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

#### Credit Requirements

- In total 12 credits are required: 6 compulsory credits - this includes 2 English credits; 1 Mathematics credit, 1 Science credit, 1 Technology / Social Studies / Secondary Mathematics or Science credit, and 1 Global Studies credit. As well, 6 elective credits.
  - Both PSP grade 11 and 12 credits and ALP Level IV credits meet the compulsory credit requirements.
  - A minimum of 5 credits must be grade 12 PSP credits or Level IV ALP credits.
- One credit used toward the diploma must be obtained as an adult (19 years of age and over). This credit may be granted through a PLAR process.
  - One credit, either PSP or ALP, must be completed through enrolling institution.
  - *No two credits* may be obtained from the same specific subject area in the same grade (with some exceptions) or level. Details on PSP credits are available in the Public School Program guide. See link:  
[http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfiles/psp/psp\\_03\\_04\\_full.pdf](http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfiles/psp/psp_03_04_full.pdf)
  - PSP programs require a minimum of 110 hours of instruction for completion. To receive an ALP credit, a minimum of 90 to 110 hours of instruction is expected.
  - Some ALP courses are 2 credits because they meet the outcomes of both grades 11 and 12.
  - Adults may choose to take all PSP credits or all ALP credits or a combination of both.
  - The credits chosen should be determined by the long-term goals of the adult. Both academic and graduate courses are available in both the PSP and ALP systems. Therefore, it is important to understand the admission requirements of the post-secondary institutions being considered by the student and to choose courses accordingly.

## Compulsory Credits

The courses outlined in the following tables offer an overview of recognized compulsory credits. It is important to note that courses may not be offered each school year or may have been offered in the past. Please contact the Department of Education to confirm credit eligibility of other credits not listed below.

### English Language Arts / Communications or French Language Arts 2 credits required

#### Public School System:

Title	Credits	Credit Type	Title	Credits	Credit Type
English 11	1	Academic	Academic Communication IV	2	Academic
English 12	1	Academic	Communication IV	2	Graduate
English Communication 11	1	Graduate			
English Communication 12	1	Graduate			

#### Adult Learning Program:

### Mathematics 1 credit required

#### Public School System:

Title	Credits	Credit Type	Title	Credits	Credit Type
Advanced Mathematics 11	1	Advanced	Academic Mathematics IV	2	Academic
Advanced Mathematics 12	1	Advanced	Mathematics IV	2	Graduate
Mathematics 11	1	Academic			
Mathematics 11	1	Academic			
Mathematics 12	1	Academic			
Mathematics Essentials 11	1	Graduate			
Mathematics Foundations 11	1	Graduate			
Mathematics Foundations 12	1	Graduate			
Pre-calculus 12	1	Advanced			

#### Adult Learning Program:

### Science 1 credit required

#### Public School System:

Title	Credits	Credit Type	Title	Credits	Credit Type
Advanced Biology 11	1	Advanced	Academic Biology IV	2	Academic
Advanced Biology 12	1	Advanced	Academic Chemistry IV	2	Academic
Advanced Chemistry 11	1	Advanced	Academic Physics IV	2	Academic
Advanced Chemistry 12	1	Advanced	Science IV	2	Graduate
Advanced Physics 11	1	Advanced			
Advanced Physics 12	1	Advanced			
Biology 11	1	Academic			
Biology 12	1	Academic			
Chemistry 11	1	Academic			
Chemistry 12	1	Academic			
Physics 11	1	Academic			
Physics 12	1	Academic			

#### Adult Learning Program:

**Technology or Social Studies or Secondary Mathematics or Science** 1 credit required

**Public School System:**

**Adult Learning Program:**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Credit Type</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Credit Type</u>
African Canadian Studies 11	1	Academic	Computer Fundamentals IV	1	Graduate
Agriculture/Agrifood 11	1	Academic	Introductory Sociology IV	1	Graduate
Canadian History 11	1	Academic			
Communications Technology 11	1	Open			
Communications Technology 12	1	Open			
Computer-Related Studies 11	1	Academic			
Computer-Related Studies 12	1	Academic			
Consumer Chemistry 11	1	Academic			
Data Processing 12	1	Open			
Design 11	1	Academic			
Earth Science 12	1	Graduate			
Electrotechnologies 11	1	Academic			
Energy, Power, and Transportation 11	1	Open			
Film and Video Production 11	1	Open			
Food Science 12	1	Academic			
Geology 12	1	Academic			
History 11	1	Academic			
History 12	1	Academic			
Law 12	1	Academic			
Modern History 11	1	Academic			
Oceans 11	1	Academic			
Physical Science 11	1	Graduate			
Political Science 12	1	Academic			
Production Technology 11	1	Open			
Production Technology 12	1	Open			
Science in the Everyday World 11	1	Open (approved locally - ALC)			
Twentieth-Century History 11	1	Graduate			
Sociology 12	1	Open			
Word/Information Processing 12	1	Open			

**Global Studies**            1 credit required

**Public School System:**

**Adult Learning Program:**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Credit Type</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Credit Type</u>
Global Geography Studies 12	1	Academic	Global Geography IV	1	Academic
History Global Studies 12	1	Academic	Global History IV	1	Academic
Global History 11	1	Academic			
Global History 12	1	Academic			
Modern World Problems 12	1	Academic			
World Geography 12	1	Academic			

Note: Adults who need only the global studies credit to graduate should contact Department of Education for possible options.

## **Elective Credits**

As noted in the PLAR section (page 3), there are a number of avenues to receiving elective credits:

- other Nova Scotia Department of Education grade 11 and 12 high school courses.
- Other approved grade 11 and 12 high school courses from outside of province.
- Adult learning programs: Career Skills Development IV, worth 1 credit, credit type: graduate and Technical Communications IV, worth 1 credit, credit type: graduate.

## **Transcript & Diploma Information**

### **Transcript**

The transcript is the official document that indicates adults' academic achievements. It is the responsibility of the institution to produce a transcript for NSSAL students registered in their establishment. All programs offering the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults will use an official transcript provided by Department of Education.

All courses should be entered chronologically from earliest to most recent, including courses that a student has repeated or failed (see Appendix B).

### **Diploma**

A *Request for Diploma* form must be filled out by the institution and sent to the department. The Department of Education will then issue the diploma.

The diploma may also be issued directly by the Department of Education if the student applies to the department and meets the diploma requirements.

## **Issuing the Transcript and the Diploma**

Delivery institutions will notify the department when a adult has successfully met the graduation requirements of the diploma. Adults graduate from the institution where they completed the last credits required for graduation.

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## **ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

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## Adult Learning Program and Course Descriptions

### Introduction

Under NSSAL, the Adult Education Division of the Department of Education is responsible for the adult learning program (ALP). The ALP is an outcomes-based education program for adult Nova Scotians who do not have a high school diploma. It is delivered in both English and French. It has been designed to help adults develop a variety of essential skills needed to learn, live, and work in their communities. Adults enrolled in the program will be able to work toward a number of personal goals, which may include the following:

- improving literacy, math, problem-solving, critical-thinking, and teamwork skills.
- acquiring the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.
- preparing to write the GED test to further employment opportunities.
- entering the workforce.
- preparing to enter a post-secondary institution.

The ALP consists of four levels of courses, which range from basic literacy to high school graduation. Levels I and II have been designed for adults who need to develop a broad range of literacy and mathematic skills. Level III has been designed for adults who need to improve a variety of skills before entering into Level IV and/or who need to improve their literacy and essential skills to assist in their life/work transitions. Level IV consists of courses that can be used toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

### The Five Cross-Cutting Themes of the Adult Learning Program

Continuous dialogue with NSSAL delivery partners has led to the recognition of both successes and challenges. In response, five cross-cutting themes have been identified that impact successful adult transition and graduation. They are employability, literacy, numeracy, technology, and inclusivity. These five themes have been integrated into all aspects of this curriculum and should be considered by ALP instructors as essential foundations when planning their daily interaction with ALP students.

The following outlines the main content areas that make up each of the four levels of the ALP.

#### Level I:

Communications, Human Relations and Mathematics

#### Level II:

Communications and Mathematics,

#### Level III:

Communications, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies

#### Level IV:

Biology, Career Skills Development, Chemistry, Communications, Computer Fundamentals, Global Geography, Global History, Introductory Sociology, Mathematics, Physics, Science, and Technical Communications

## Course Descriptions

### Adult Learning Program—Level I

#### Communications Level I

This course focuses on introducing adults to writing and reading processes and strategies. Literacy skills are developed by recognizing writing and reading as tools of communication. Adults will utilize their own life and learning experiences to explore issues of interest and relevance to their daily lives.

#### Mathematics Level I

Adults are introduced to the basic mathematical concepts of whole numbers (equations and addition). By the completion of this course, adults are expected to be able to complete basic computations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) through rote memory or by adeptly using other tools, skills, and strategies.

#### Human Relations Level I

Adults are expected to explore and improve their communication and relationship skills in order to optimize their learning successes. For those adults considering further studies, exploration of strengths and areas requiring improvement will be explored.

### Adult Learning Program—Level II

#### Communications Level II

Adults are expected to improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills through exploring a diverse range of topics of relevance and personal interest. Communication and literacy skills are developed for personal expression, to communicate with others and to gather, manage and present information. Throughout, adults focus on identification of their effective learning strategies and work to strengthen these learning strengths.

#### Mathematics Level II

Adults will increase their accuracy and automaticity of basic computation skills (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) and apply these to solving problems involving decimals, fractions, percents, measurement, and basic geometry. A significant amount of time will be dedicated to connecting mathematics to the students' everyday lives. This will be accomplished by examining purchasing, budgeting and banking situations, and through the interpretation of relevant statistical information and probability data.

### Adult Learning Program—Level III

#### Communications Level III

This course provides adults with opportunities to extend their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills with texts (text, media, visual) of increasing sophistication. With a focus on self-awareness of learning strengths, adults are encouraged to create written and other texts for a broad range of audiences and purposes, integrating a variety of technologies. Adults are encouraged to infuse their work with topics of relevance, in particular, employment related goals.

#### Mathematics Level III

This course provides adults with opportunities to improve their numeracy, calculation, and problem solving skills. Adults are encouraged to identify problem solving strategies that work for them and to make personal connections to the mathematical topics covered in this course. These topics include exponents, scientific notation, fractions, decimals, percents, integers, order of operations, consumer math, statistics, geometry, introductory algebra, and introductory trigonometry.

### **Science Level III**

This course provides adults with an overview of three major branches of science: biology, chemistry, and physics. It provides opportunities for hands-on investigations reinforced through personal reflections. Adults are encouraged to connect science concepts with their daily lives and examine employment opportunities where these concepts and skills are used.

### **Social Studies Level III**

Social studies provides adults with opportunities to explore communities through an introduction to history, geography, economics, diversity, culture, and citizenship. Adults will focus on current issues that impact Canadian workplaces, particularly in their own communities. They are encouraged to develop skills in critical analysis of various media.

### **Adult Learning Program—Level IV**

The ALP Level IV is an outcomes-based program designed to meet the needs of adults who are returning to learning to earn a high school credential to enter into a post-secondary education or training programs, or to increase their employability. The ALP Level IV courses may be used as credit toward the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

### **The ALP Level IV program currently consists of the following:**

Academic Biology IV  
Academic Chemistry IV  
Academic Communications IV  
Academic Mathematics IV  
Academic Physics IV  
Career Skills Development IV  
Communications IV  
Computer Fundamentals IV  
Global Geography IV  
Global History IV  
Introductory Sociology IV  
Mathematics IV  
Science IV  
Technical Communications IV

### **Academic Biology IV (academic, 2 credits)**

Biology is the study of life, and adults will study life processes and understand the unifying principles and concepts applicable to all life forms. Particular attention is given to the study of human life. Topics include the cell and microbiology, human systems, ecosystems, and genetics and evolution. Throughout the course, adults will develop a respect for life processes, an understanding of how science benefits society, and knowledge of the interaction between science technology and society.

Adults who successfully complete this course will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for entry into university and college courses that require academic preparation in biology.

**Academic Chemistry IV** (academic, 2 credits)

In this course, the connection between science, technology, and society is explored. Adults will develop their logic and reasoning skills when they approach topics such as matter and substances, acids and bases, chemical reactions and equations, predicting chemical reactions, organic chemistry, thermo and electro-chemistry, stoichiometric calculations, and reactions and bonds.

Adults who successfully complete this course will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for entry into university and college courses that require academic preparation in chemistry.

**Academic Communications IV**  
(academic, 2 credits)

Adults expand their skills as communicators by developing their knowledge of different genres of literature, by increasing their skills and abilities in report and research writing, and by developing leadership skills. They document sources, summarize and make notes, examine a variety of media, and discuss and present their own ideas.

This course is designed to provide adults with the background they will need to succeed in post-secondary programs that require a high level of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

**Academic Mathematics IV**  
(academic, 2 credits)

This course is designed to provide adults with the mathematics background to understand real-world phenomena. It stresses the movement from the concrete to the abstract using problem-solving skills and strategies. It will review, extend, or introduce mathematics concepts in the following areas: exponents, polynomials, factoring, radicals, rational expressions, coordinate geometry, linear and quadratic equations, introduction to trigonometry, statistics and probability, sine and cosine, and conic sections.

Adults who successfully complete this course will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for entry into university and college courses that require academic preparation in mathematics.

**Academic Physics IV** (academic, 2 credits)

This course is designed to provide adults with a solid understanding of fundamental physics concepts and principles. Adults will develop the ability to see how the physical principles underlie many seemingly unrelated aspects of the world. The emphasis in the course is on problem solving, which requires that adults understand the concepts and apply the knowledge to new situations. This course covers a range of topics, including atomic theory, force, energy, mechanics, fluids, heat, hydraulics, and electrical circuits and energy.

Adults who successfully complete this course will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for entry into university and college courses that require academic preparation in physics.

**Career Skills Development IV**  
(graduate, 1 credit)

Course outcomes focus on researching and comparing labour market information on employment destinations of personal interest to adults. Through this process, adults are asked to apply critical thinking skills to plan realistic pathways to attain personal career goals. Adults develop a career portfolio through a process of investigations starting with an inventory of personal resources, research into current labour market information, and exploration of current workplace expectations and issues.

**Communications IV** (graduate, 2 credits)

Adults learn to be active readers, writers, listeners, and speakers who critically examine and evaluate ideas and conduct research. They will document sources and utilize charts, tables, and graphs. The course includes a literature component in which adults will study poetry, novels, short stories, and plays. The purpose of this course is to develop adults' skills so that they will become better communicators, problem solvers, critical thinkers, and collaborative and independent adults.

**Computer Fundamentals IV**  
(graduate, 1 credit)

This course presents the fundamentals of microcomputer hardware and software. Adults will identify and use the components of a computer system, use Windows, perform basic disk and file management tasks, perform basic functions using word processing, spreadsheet, and database software. As part of this course, adults will become familiar with the effective use of the Internet and e-mail.

**Global Geography IV** (academic, 1 credit)

Global geography explores how the interconnected biosphere is subject to change. In this course, adults will develop an understanding of environmental issues and an appreciation of the impact that these have on their own life choices. Global geography includes a study of such topics as the global environment, the population dilemma, urbanization, and global resources.

**Global History IV** (academic, 1 credit)

Global history provides adults with a basic knowledge of how people in all countries are interconnected. This course examines history from three perspectives—social, economic, and political. The topics cover themes such as political interdependence, the economic gap, global justice, and the revolution in technology. While adults will examine some key issues in history that have led to the current state of our world, they will also identify and analyse some of the new historical trends that will emerge during the 21st century.

**Introductory Sociology IV** (graduate, 1 credit)

This course introduces adults to basic sociological concepts, theories, and perspectives, so that they may have a better understanding of society and its social processes. The topic areas to be covered include research methods, social behaviour, culture, social class, deviance, social institutions, and technology and the mass media. In conjunction with these topics, adults will have the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills by reading and interpreting print and visual texts, creating, writing, and presenting ideas, and recognizing the sociological implications of issues within their own communities.

### **Mathematics IV** (graduate, 2 credits)

This course is designed for adults who have not studied algebra, but have a firm background in basic mathematics. The emphasis is on problem solving to investigate and understand mathematical content. The course will use a variety of real-life experiences and provide learning activities that will reinforce and extend the adults' logical reasoning skills. It includes such topics as fundamental concepts, measurement, consumer math, algebra, trigonometry, and applied statistics.

### **Science IV** (graduate, 2 credits)

This course was developed to serve the needs of adults who do not require academic physics, chemistry, and biology credits as preparation for their post-secondary or vocational goals. It is designed to help adults connect science to their lives and the world around them. Adults will have the opportunity to discover topics such as healthy lifestyle, consumer chemistry, the sustainable environment, psychology, materials, technology, and forensic science.

### **Technical Communications IV**

(graduate, 1 credit)

This course is designed to provide adults with an overview of the knowledge and skills necessary to perform tasks integral to the processing and communicating of technical information. Through various methods, including group work and individual presentations, adults will be given many opportunities for hands-on learning.

To register in this course, adults are required to have all of the following:

- completed Communications III or English language arts at least to the grade 10 level or equivalent; preferably, adults will have completed many of the outcomes for either Academic Communications IV or Communications IV.
- demonstrated the ability to write clear and concise sentences/paragraphs and competency in proper grammar usage.
- demonstrated facility with word-processing software to create and format documents.
- or they must have written permission from the ALP Academic Chair.

**Note:** As the use of technology is integrated throughout this course, teachers and adults must have consistent access to computers.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Compulsory credits**

Credits that an adult must earn, in specific subject areas, to successfully complete the requirements for a credential.

### **Credit**

A certified unit of assessment that recognizes the successful completion of a defined set of learning outcomes.

### **Diploma**

Certificate or deed issued by an educational institution, such as a university, that testifies that the recipient has successfully completed a particular course of study, or confers an academic degree.

### **Elective credits**

Credits that the adult completes from a wide variety of courses to fulfil the requirements of a credential. These courses do not have to be chosen from particular subject areas and may be used by adults to assist in meeting personal or professional goals.

### **Transfer of Credit Assessment Form**

A form that is completed for adults who are using previously completed course work to fulfil the requirements of the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.

### **Transcript**

An official academic record that lists the courses completed, the credits awarded, and the grades received.

### **Transfer credits**

Credits achieved in one program and recognized by an educational institution as satisfying the various requirements in another program. The recognition process involves the assessment of learning outcomes and alleviates the need to repeat previous learning. The credits granted to courses successfully completed outside the receiving institution must meet established criteria.

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**APPENDIX B**  
**SAMPLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT**

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## High School Transcript

High School Graduation Diploma for Adults

Student Name:

Institution Name: Department of Education

Address: 2021 Brunswick Street  
PO Box 578  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2S9

Student Identifier: Not Applicable

Phone: 902 424 0882

Year	Course Title	Grade	Mark	Credit Type	Credit	Status	Lang
1989	Chemistry	11	53	ACAD	1.0	PSP	ENG
	Computer-Related Studies	11	71	OPEN	1.0	PSP	ENG
	English	11	52	ACAD	1.0	PSP	ENG
	Mathematics	11	51	ACAD	1.0	PSP	ENG
	French	11	80	ACAD	1.0	PSP	FRE
	Science	11	62	ACAD	1.0	PSP	ENG
1990	Law	12	54	ACAD	1.0	PSP	ENG
	Business Mathematics	12	66	GRAD	1.0	PSP	ENG
1992	Elective – Computer Operator		CR	POST	2.0	TC	ENG
	Scotia Career Academy						
2000	English	12	68	ACAD	1.0	PSP	ENG
2002	Elective – Accounting		CR	POST	1.0	TC	ENG
	St. Lawrence College of Applied Arts & Technology						
Total credits earned					12.0		

Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults awarded November 14, 2005.

An official transcript must be printed on official transcript paper and bear the school seal.  
Only ONE CREDIT will be awarded for courses which have been passed more than once.

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Official Signature of InstitutionTitleDate

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**APPENDIX C**  
**EXPLANATION OF HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT**

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## High School Transcript

### Explanation of the Three Main Sections of the Transcript

#### A General Information Section

*Student Name:* Enter the student's surname first, then the first given name, second given name, and initial, if any.

*Student Identifier:* Enter the student number (if applicable).

*Institution Name, Address, and Phone:* Enter the appropriate information.

#### B Academic Information Section

*Year:* Enter the year the course was successfully completed, repeated, or failed. The courses should be listed in order from least recent to most recent.

*Course Title:* Enter the full name of the course.

*Grade:* For PSP courses enter the grade level at which the course was offered. For ALP Level IV courses, enter grade 12. For all other types of courses, leave this section blank.

*Mark:* Enter the final mark that the student received in the course.

Different codes to enter if student does not have a mark:

CR If the credit is a transfer credit which indicates a pass mark.

F Failure to complete a course. If the student withdrew from a course prior to completion, do not record it on the transcript.

IP (In progress). If the course has not been completed as yet. If the credit was earned via

PL If credit was earned via PLAR.

Repeat of course - Should a student decide to repeat a course to increase her or his mark, indicate both marks on the transcript. Only one credit earned will be indicated, and this will correspond with the course with the higher mark.

#### Credit Type

Enter the appropriate code as follows:

ACAD (Academic): These courses are designed for students who expect to enter college, university, or other post-secondary institutions.

ADV (Advanced): These courses are designed for students who have demonstrated an exceptional degree of academic ability or achievement.

GRAD (Graduation): These courses are designed for students who wish to obtain a graduation diploma with a view to proceeding to employment or some selected area of post-secondary study.

OPEN (Open): Although none of these courses is designed to meet the specific entrance requirements of any post-secondary institution, individual courses may meet entrance requirements of some institutions.

POST (Post-secondary): These courses have been completed at a post-secondary institution and have been granted as transfer credits.

*Credit:* Enter the credit value earned for the course.

*Status:* Enter the appropriate code as follows:

ALC (Approved Local Course): A locally developed course offered by a school, board, or college and approved by the Department of Education. Independent study credits developed within provincial policy guidelines are also designated as approved local courses.

ALP/FGA (Adult Learning Program/Formation générale des adultes): All courses authorized by the Department of Education.

PSP (Public School Program): All courses authorized by the Department of Education.

TC (Transfer Credit): Credits awarded externally and recognized by the institution issuing the transcript.

**Language:** Enter the language of instruction:

- ENG English
- GER German
- FRA French (first language)
- LAT Latin
- FRE French (second language/immersion)
- MI' Mi'kmaq
- GAE Gaelic
- SPA Spanish

**Total Credits Earned:** Enter the total number of credits recorded on the transcript.

## **C Official Validation Section**

**Official Signature of Institution:** The transcript must be signed by the designated official of the enrolling institution, normally the principal or registrar. The transcript should also bear the school seal if one is available.

**Title:** Enter the title of the signatory.

**Date:** Enter the date of issue; include name of month using the following format: (e.g.) October 15, 2007.

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**APPENDIX D**  
**CREDIT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

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## Credit Assessment Checklist

The following is the documentation needed to review a course or program.

1. A copy of original transcript / diploma / certification  
(ie. British Columbia – Permanent Record – this is not an official transcript).  
In regards to trade program, if student obtained red seal certification, then a copy of original document is also required.
2. Course name and name of education institution
3. Start and end date of course
4. Length of course – total weeks or hours
5. Number of hours per week
6. Course outline / outcomes
7. Method of testing and evaluation

Students are responsible to submit the proper documentation. Failure to submit proper documentation will result in the delay of the assessment.