The Bishop Strachan School

Ontario Secondary School Diploma Requirements
2018-19
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Achieving the Ontario Secondary School Diploma

It is a requirement in Ontario for all students to remain in secondary school until the age of eighteen or until the student has achieved the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Our community values the importance of achieving the OSSD as an important first step towards post secondary study. This document contains important information about the requirements to achieve the OSSD at BSS, along with information to support students from outside of Ontario.

Course Requirements

A credit is granted in recognition of the successful completion (that is, completion with a final percentage mark of 50% or higher) of a course that has been scheduled for a minimum of 110 hours. An OSSD requires 30 credits over Grades 9 through 12. Of the 30 credits, 18 credits are compulsory and must be attained from specific subject areas. The remaining 12 credits are optional, or elective, meaning that students choose the subject areas of study.

- Grade 9 and 10 students must enrol in and maintain 8 full credit courses
- Grade 11 students must enrol in and maintain a minimum of 7 full credit courses
- Grade 12 students must enrol in and maintain a minimum of 5 full credit courses

The 18 compulsory credits are made up of the following 15 course credits:

- 4 English (1 credit per grade)
- 1 French as a second language
- 3 Math (at least one credit in Grade 11 or 12)
- 2 Science
- 1 Canadian History
- 1 Canadian Geography
- 1 Arts
- 1 Health & Physical Education
- 0.5 Civics
- 0.5 Career Studies

....plus 1 credit from each of these 3 groups:

Group 1
- English or French as a second Language
- a Native language
- a Classical or an International language
- Social Science and the Humanities
- Canadian and World Studies
- Guidance and Career Education
- Co-operative Education

Group 2
- Health & Physical Education
- Music
- Art, Drama or Dance
- Business/Entrepreneurial Studies
- French as a Second Language
- Co-operative Education
Group 3
- Science in Grade 11 or 12 only
- Technology
- Computer Studies
- French as a Second Language
- Co-operative Education

Optional Credits
Choices for optional credits vary by grade and individual circumstances, but in general:
- In Grade 9, students have 6 compulsory courses and can choose 2 optional courses.
- In Grade 10, students have 5 compulsory courses and can choose 3 optional courses.
- In Grade 11, students have 3 compulsory courses and can choose a minimum of 4 optional courses.
- In Grade 12, students have 1 compulsory course and can choose a minimum of 4 optional courses.

BSS Subject Pathways show the courses available for each grade, and during course selection, the Course Selection process will indicate which are compulsory. Students may choose courses from subject areas that interest them, as long as they have successfully attained the prerequisite (or equivalent level) course. Notes:
- Students must also complete 40 hours of Community Involvement and the Ontario Literacy Requirement (see below)
- A maximum of 3 credits in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Literacy Development (ELD) may be counted toward the 4 compulsory credits in English, but the fourth must be a credit earned for a Grade 12 compulsory English course.
- In Groups 1, 2 and 3, a maximum of 2 credits in French as a Second Language can be granted with one from Group 1, and the other from either Group 2 or Group 3.
- Only 2 credits in Cooperative Education can be granted as compulsory credits.
- Students are also required to take the following BSS-compulsory credits:
  - One additional activity credit e.g., Physical Education or Dance after Grade 9 and before you graduate
  - French, or start a new language e.g., Spanish or Mandarin in Grades 10, 11 and 12

BSS Requirement for Compulsory Courses
Compulsory courses must be taken at BSS day school, BSS Summer Academy or online through the eLearning Consortium Canada (ELCC).

Community Involvement
The Ontario Ministry of Education requires all students to complete 40 hours of service work between Grades 9 to 12. Service Leadership at BSS is a great way for students to learn the importance of volunteerism as they explore both short-term and long-term volunteer opportunities, including community activities and international trips through our Local and Global Citizenship Program.
Ontario Secondary School Literacy Requirement

All students must successfully complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Requirement in order to earn a secondary school diploma. The Ontario School Literacy Test is normally written in the Grade 10 year and is based on the Ontario curriculum expectations for language and communication, particularly reading and writing, up to and including Grade 9. If students do not complete the test successfully, BSS will provide remedial assistance (at an additional charge) to help improve skills so that students are better prepared to retake the literacy test the following year. Students who do not successfully complete the test after taking it twice, may take the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) which is designed to help students acquire and demonstrate the cross-curricular literacy skills that are evaluated by the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. Students who complete the course successfully will meet the provincial literacy requirement for graduation. Students will read a variety of informational, narrative, and graphic texts and will produce a variety of forms of writing, including summaries, information paragraphs, opinion pieces, and news reports. Students will also maintain and manage a literacy portfolio containing a record of their reading experiences and samples of their writing. Once a student has successfully completed the literacy test, she may not retake the test. Successful completion of the test (or the OSSLC) is recorded on the Ontario Student Transcript.

Literacy Test Accommodations

Accommodations will be made to ensure students with documented special needs have a fair and equal opportunity to successfully complete the literacy test. While accommodations such as alternative forms of print and extra time are acceptable, the actual content of the secondary school literacy test must not be altered.

Literacy Test Deferrals

Students who might benefit from a deferral of the test may include students who have not yet acquired the level of proficiency in English required for successfully completing the test. If a parent requests a deferral, the School will determine whether or not a deferral should be granted and, if so, for what period of time. The School may also initiate consideration of a deferral in consultation with the parent.

University Entrance

To qualify for university entrance, six of the 30 credits required for an OSSD must be a combination of 4U or 4M (Grade 12 level) courses. Students also need the necessary prerequisites for the courses they wish to apply. In general, schools outside of Ontario will accept students when they have met the diploma requirements set for Ontario. Students are responsible for checking each university’s program requirements to ensure they have the correct combination of 4U and 4M courses to submit an application. The school counsellors can help with this.

BSS offers the following types of courses:

- Grade 9 and 10 Academic and Open courses
- Grade 11 and 12 University, University/College, College and Open courses
- Advanced Placement (AP) courses (not required for or recorded on the Ontario Secondary School Diploma)

**Academic courses** develop students’ knowledge and skills through the study of theory and abstract problems. These courses focus on the essential concepts of a subject and explore related concepts well. They incorporate practical applications as appropriate.

**Open courses**, which comprise a set of expectations that are appropriate for all students, are designed to broaden students’ knowledge and skills in subjects that reflect their interest and prepare them for active and rewarding participation in society. They are not designed with the specific requirements of university, college, or the workplace in mind.

**University preparation** courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for university programs.

**University/college preparation** courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for specific programs offered at universities and colleges.

**Withdrawal from a Course**

If a student withdraws from a course after five instructional days following the issue of the second report card, the withdrawal is registered on the OST by recording a “W” in the credit column. The student’s percentage grade at the time of the withdrawal is recorded in the percentage column.

**Substitutions for Compulsory Courses**

In order to allow flexibility in designing a student’s program, substitutions may be made for a limited number of compulsory credits. A substitution credit means that the student does not have to take one of the 18 credits from the Ministry’s compulsory credit list. For example, students coming to BSS with no background in French may not be required to take the one compulsory French credit. It might be replaced with another course such as an alternate language. The decision to make a substitution should be made only if the student’s educational interests are best served by such a substitution. The Principal, Senior School, upon recommendation from the Vice Principal, Academic Administration, may replace up to three courses from the remainder of those that meet the compulsory credit requirements. The decision will be made in consultation with parents and appropriate school staff. Each substitution will be noted on the student’s Ontario Student Transcript.

**Prerequisites**

Students may take a course at any grade level provided they have successfully completed the prerequisite course or have been granted an equivalency credit for the prerequisite.

**Process for Waiving Prerequisites**

A course prerequisite may be waived if it is determined that the student meets the required course criteria. Each request to waive a course prerequisite will be considered on an individual basis. The process involves consultation with the appropriate vice principal, department head and counsellor. Approval for waiving prerequisites is granted by the Principal, Senior School.
Ontario Student Transcript (OST)
The Ontario Student Transcript (OST) provides a common and consistent summary of a student's successful achievement in Ontario secondary school credit courses. It lists all Grade 9 and 10 credit courses in which a student has achieved a passing mark in an Ontario secondary school. The marks obtained for Grade 11 and 12 courses, including failing marks, appear on the transcript. For Grade 9 and 10 courses, if a course is taken twice, only the higher mark is shown on the transcript. In all Grade 11 and 12 courses, the mark obtained appears on the OST unless the student has dropped the course within five days after the second report. Students who transfer to BSS from outside Ontario are given "equivalent credits" and are granted the appropriate compulsory credits upon examination of their records. The OST is the official student record and is maintained in the student's OSR (Ontario Student Record).

Ontario Student Record (OSR)
The Ontario Student Record (OSR) is the official record of a student's educational progress while in Ontario schools. An OSR is established when a student enters an Ontario school and moves with the student as the student goes from school to school within Ontario. The OSR contains report cards, credits earned and other information important to the improvement of instruction of the student. The contents of the OSR may be examined by the student and/or the parents of a student who is not an adult, on request, with the assistance of the Head or designated administrator.

Information for Students from Outside Ontario

The Equivalency Process – Granting Credits
The equivalency process is the process of granting credits to students from other jurisdictions outside of Ontario. In establishing equivalency for students who do not have Ontario credits, Student Services will determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, the student will be granted based on assessment of prior academic records. They will also determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the student must earn, as well as other diploma requirements that the student must satisfy, in order to qualify for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Granted credits will show as Prior Learning Equivalent (PLE) on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST) with a mark of EQV.

For example, a student coming to BSS in Grade 11 whose academic records indicate that she has done a minimum of two years studying science at the high school level will be granted two compulsory science credits (Grades 9 and 10). This student would then be eligible to select any 3U (Grade 11) level science offered at BSS. General Guidelines for granting credits (PLE’s)*

- Entering Grade 7, 8 or 9 → 0 credits; 0 community service hours granted
- Entering Grade 10 → 8 credits; 0 community service hours granted
- Entering Grade 11 → 16 credits; 20 community service hours granted
- Entering Grade 12 → 23 credits; 30 community service hours granted

* Each student’s academic history will be reviewed carefully as exceptions do exist.
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby students may obtain credits for prior learning experiences. Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in the provincial curriculum. The PLAR process involves two components: equivalency and challenge. The equivalency process is the process of granting credits to students from other jurisdictions. The challenge process is the process of assessing a student’s prior learning for the purpose of granting a Grade 10, 11 or 12 credit that is offered at BSS. There is a fee of $500 for students to challenge for a PLAR.

The Challenge Process

Students are responsible for initiating the challenge process and for satisfying all of the course requirements. Application forms are available from the Student Services Office. Each application will be evaluated in consultation with the student, parents and the appropriate school staff to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists, and whether the challenge should occur. Students may use materials or records of accomplishment earned outside the classroom as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for a credit.

Assessment and evaluation strategies for the challenge process must include formal tests (70% of the final mark) and a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate for the particular course (30% of the final mark). The formal tests must have a balance between written work and practical demonstration that is appropriate for the subject/discipline. Other assessment strategies may include evaluation of written assignments, demonstrations/performances, laboratory work, quizzes, and observation of student work.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

BSS offers ESL support for students. The foundation ESL course has been specially designed to prepare students for success in later courses in the Senior School, as well as college and university preparation. Students will develop the reading, writing, and oral presentation skills required for success in all subjects. They study and interpret a variety of grade-level texts, develop oral communication skills through participation in informal debates and seminars, and extend their range of research skills. Students also have many opportunities to build confidence in their oral English skills in informal discussions and activities as well as formal presentations.