

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS
Information for Students and
Parents/Guardians



September 2017

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High school students who have met requirements for personal development credits from providers approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education 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 compulsory 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 Education if you have questions about credits or approved course and program providers.

What is included in this Guide?

1. What are Personal Development Credits?	2
2. The Different Types of Personal Development Credits	2
3. Personal Development Credits and Program Planning for High School Students.....	3
4. I Have a Personal Development Credit Certificate, Now What?	4
5. Personal Development Credit—Student Notification Form	5
6. Personal Development Credits—Questions and Answers	6

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 policy, personal development credits can be awarded in three areas:

1. Arts
2. Languages
3. Leadership

Credits will be awarded for approved courses or programs provided by a group or organization that is recognized by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as an approved 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 10, 11, or 12 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 the credential required for 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 once they enter high school.

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 will determine whether a personal development credit qualifies as a grade 10, 11, or 12 credit. Based on the time involved in earning the credit, the Department will also decide if the credit qualifies as a half or full credit. The list of approved providers and courses with their corresponding credits as they would appear on a student's transcript can be found at https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/final_approved_provider_and_course_list_for_2017-2018.pdf.

Personal Development Credits and Program Planning for High School Students

High school students who have earned a personal development credit by successfully completing an approved course or program through one of the approved providers 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 graduation.

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

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. Only credits approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will be recognized, and students are encouraged to check the Approved Provider and Course List 2017–18 on the Personal Development Credit website [<https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca>] before submitting a personal development credit Student Notification form to their guidance counsellor or administrator at their school.

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 recognised 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.

To see if you are eligible for a personal development credit in the arts follow this link to the Department of Education’s website—Approved Provider and Course List 2017–2018 or speak with a guidance counsellor at your school.

2. Languages

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

If you have learned a new language in a course or program approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and have 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. To see whether the language school and the course you have completed have been approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and whether it qualifies for a half or full credit for grade 10, 11, or 12, follow this link [<https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca>] to view the Approved Provider and Course List 2017–2018 or speak with a guidance counsellor at your school.

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, to environmental and agricultural stewardship, to name just a few. At the centre of leadership courses or programs approved by the Department of Education is a commitment to personal and community development in high quality learning experiences that capture students’ interests and aspirations.

If you have met all of the requirements of an approved leadership course and received the required credential in recognition of your achievement, you may be eligible to have it recognized as a personal

development credit on your high school transcript. To see if your leadership credential has been approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and whether it qualifies for a half or full credit for grade 10, 11, or 12 follow this link [<https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca>] to view the Approved Provider and Course List 2017–2018.

Note: The Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards have been acknowledged by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as three (3) credits (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) since 2004. With the development and expansion of Personal Development Credits, the Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards will become a Personal Development Credit in September 2016. As a Personal Development Credit, the Duke of Edinburgh Award will provide students with the potential to earn three (3) credits (Grade 10, Bronze; Grade 11, Silver; and Grade 12, Gold). As with all Personal Development Credits, a grade of “P” for Pass will be awarded for each credit. Please note that only one credit counts towards the student’s elective credits. The other two would appear on the transcript but not count towards the 18 required credits for graduation.

Students entering in September 2017 must make application for credits through the Personal Development Credit process. Students who entered grade 10 in the fall of 2015 or earlier will follow existing Duke of Edinburgh guidelines for the three years they are in high school.

What is new for 2017-18?

Department of National Defense (Basic Training Course)	Dance Nova Scotia (Pre-Professional Ballet Program and Highland Dance Premier Dancer)
4-H	Swim Nova Scotia (NCCP Swimming Fundamentals Coach Level 1)

I Have a Personal Development Credit Certificate, 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 that all of the required 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 [<https://pdc.ednet.ns.ca>] to make sure the provider of the course or program you have completed is approved. On this site you will also be able to find out whether the course you have completed is eligible for a grade 10, 11 or 12 elective credit and whether 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 are eligible to be awarded a credit is not the right one, it is your responsibility to contact the organization that provided 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 approved 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

Questions and Answers

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. This Personal Development Credit 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 compulsory and five elective credits required for graduation.

Q. Which programs are eligible?

A. In 2015–2016 and thereafter, students can earn the credit for successfully completing approved programs from the list of approved course providers.

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

A: They can earn only one elective credit towards the 18 credits minimum required for graduation. It can be a grade 10, 11, or 12 credit, depending on the designation that the department determines. However, they can have more than one credit appear on their transcript beyond the 18 required.

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

A. The credit can be added to a student's 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 of the approved course/program 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 become an approved provider. The next application cycle will be in 2018–19 with approved program providers added for the 2019–20 school year.