

MEMORANDUM

To..... SENATE

From..... SENATE UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

BOARD

Subject.... PROVINCIAL EXAMINATIONS

Date..... OCTOBER 26, 1983

Commencing January, 1984, the B.C. Ministry of Education will hold compulsory Grade 12 examinations in the 13 academic courses. The attached information has been extracted from a Ministry Policy Circular dated September 21, 1983.

The University has expressed its intent to use final grades (i.e. school grades plus exam grade) for admission purposes, but "Dogwood" statements are not expected before mid-August, creating some potential timing problems for Fall admission. At present, the Ministry is working on ways of alleviating these time constraints by reporting grades directly to the universities and colleges.

A decision has been taken jointly by the three Provincial universities that the minimum interim grade point average which will be accepted for "Early Processing" will be raised from 2.5 to 2.75. This will not affect the admission grade point average which remains at 2.5, as determined by Senate.

Early Processing takes place annually in May and applies only to Fall Semester entry of B.C. Grade 12 students. The final grades of applicants are projected by the secondary schools and the documents are sent to us direct from the schools. Approximately 1500 students applied this way in 1983.

It should be noted that some of the four courses accepted for admission purposes will not be examined in 1983. These are:

Western Civilization 12
 Geometry 12
 Probability and Statistics 12

SUAB is concerned that, at present, the Ministry has no plans to make the exams available to independent (non-Group II) schools. This is under review (see attached p.7, para 21). Presently, it appears that some of the potential benefits to the University of the exams will be lost if the so-called "visa" schools are excluded.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR MINISTRY INITIATED TESTING ACTIVITIES

October 12-14	Reading Assessment - pilot testing - one hour in selected schools.
November 15	Grade 12 Provincial & Scholarship Examinations - Registration deadline for January sittings.
January 23-31	Grade 12 Provincial and Scholarship Examinations - Administration.
February 22	Grade 12 Provincial Examinations - Schools and Students receive results.
March 15	Grade 12 Provincial and Scholarship Examinations - Registration deadline for June sittings.
May 3-7	Reading Assessment - One hour test for all students in grades 4, 7, and 10.
June 21	Grade 7 Provincial Mathematics Achievement Test - One hour Administration.
June 22	Grade 7 Provincial Reading Achievement Test - One hour Administration.
June 14-22	Grade 12 Provincial and Scholarship Examinations - Administration.
July 23	Grade 12 Provincial Examinations - Results sent to Schools, Students and requested Post-Secondary Institutions.
August 3	Grade 12 August Provincial Supplemental Examinations - Registration deadline.
August 15	Scholarship Examinations - Results announced.
August (T.B.A.)	Grade 12 Provincial Supplemental Examinations - Administration.
September 1	Reading Assessment Results for Grades 4,7, and 10 sent to districts.
September 14	Grade 12 August Provincial Supplemental Examinations - Results sent to schools and students.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE GRADE 12 PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION PROGRAM.

1. WHAT ARE THE PROVINCIAL EXAMINATIONS?

The examinations will be keyed to the provincial curriculum and will be administered to all students in Public and Group 2 Independent Schools who are registered in the following courses:

English 12, Literature 12, French 12, German 12, Spanish 12, Latin 12, Algebra 12, Biology 12, Geology 12, Physics 12, Chemistry 12, Geography 12, History 12.

Those students who have already completed any of the above courses in 1982-83 will be exempt from the examination and their course credit will stand;

The exams will be administered in January, June, and August 1984. (August will be for supplementals only).

2. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION PROGRAM?

The purpose of this program is to ensure that grade 12 students meet consistent provincial standards of achievement in the academic subjects. The examination program will also ensure that graduating students from all schools in the province will be treated equitably when applying for admission to universities and other post-secondary institutes. An additional purpose of this program is to respond to strong public concerns for improved standards of education.

3. HOW LONG ARE THE EXAMINATIONS?

With the exception of English 12, all Provincial Examinations will be two hours long. English 12 will be a three hour examination to allow time for students to do the required writing and reading of selections.

Students writing for a scholarship will write respective Provincial Examinations followed by a short break and then write the Scholarship component which will be a one hour test. Those students writing for a French 12 scholarship will have an additional one hour auditory examination.

Scholarship marks will be derived by combining the scores from the Provincial and Scholarship component of the examination.

4. WHAT DO STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ENGLISH 12 PROVINCIAL FINAL EXAMINATION?

There is no English 12 Scholarship Examination.

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Provincial Scholarship candidates will be required, however, to achieve at least a 50% on the English 12 Provincial Examination. There will be no opportunity to rewrite this examination for provincial scholarship purposes, although students can rewrite for the purpose of improving their course standing.

Students registered in English 12 (M.E.) will not write the Provincial English 12 Examination. The M.E. designation may be assigned by the principal (for this year only) at any time prior to the examination. Principals are reminded, however, that final marks in English 12 (M.E.) are to be given on a pass/fail basis only and that not all post-secondary institutions will accept students with M.E. designation. Refer to Schools Department Circular No. 23 (22.8.77)

The English 12 Examination will use sight passages for Literature and Reading. None of the sight passages will be taken from the prescribed or authorized learning resources.

5. HOW DOES STUDENT REGISTRATION TAKE PLACE?

Students will register for both Scholarship and Provincial Examinations on the same form. Some important dates are:

November 15 deadline for mailing of Student Registration Forms by principals of semestered schools for January sittings of both Provincial and Scholarship Examinations;

March 15 deadline for mailing of Student Registration Forms by principals of full-year and semestered schools for June sittings of both Provincial and Scholarship Examinations.

It is the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that the students are fully informed of the registration requirements and the deadline dates.

Registration forms for the August Supplemental Examinations will be available from any school board office in the Province. Students may wish to write the August Supplementals in an attempt to either pass a 'failed' course or to improve their mark in any course. The deadline for mailing of registration forms is August 3, 1984.

6. WHO SETS AND MARKS THE EXAMINATIONS?

The examinations will be set and marked by committees of experienced classroom teachers. The Ministry will select these teachers from those who make application to serve on the committees.

Application forms will be sent to all schools in September.

7. HOW WILL THE STUDENT'S FINAL MARK BE CALCULATED?

The final course mark will be a combination of the school mark and the examination mark:

- the school will submit a mark between 0% and 100% based on the year's work;
- the Ministry will provide a mark between 0% and 100% obtained from the results of the Provincial Examination;
- the results of the Provincial Examination will in some cases be adjusted scores to control for variation in examination difficulty;
- the final mark expressed as a percent will be the average of the school mark and the Provincial Examination mark;
- percentage scores submitted by schools and reported by the Ministry will be equated to letter grades as follows;

A = 86% to 100% Excellent Achievement
B = 73% to 85% Very Good Achievement

C+ = 67% to 72%) Satisfactory Achievement
C = 60% to 66%)

P = 50% to 59% Pass
F = below 50% Fail.

8. WHEN WILL SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS RECEIVE PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION RESULTS FROM THE MINISTRY?

Results will be made available on the following dates:

- February 22 (for the January Examinations);
- July 23 (for the June Examinations);
- September 14 (for the August Supplementals).

Scholarship Examination results will be announced as outlined in the policies and procedures document on Provincial Scholarships that is distributed to schools each fall.

9. WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO WITH THE RESULTS?

Upon completion of courses in examinable subjects the students' letter grade marks are to be entered on their Permanent Record cards in pencil.

Upon receipt of examination results from the Ministry, a school should enter a Composite Letter Grade Only on the P.R. card in ink. Public schools should follow their normal procedure for issuing Dogwood Certificates. A student's final standing in those courses passed should be recorded as a letter-grade. Independent schools will follow normal procedure for the issuance of their own graduation certificates.

If students request that their results be forwarded to post-secondary institutions, a copy of a student's P.R. card should be sent to the institution. The P.R. card should be signed by the principal and marked 'interim' copy.

10. HOW DO POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS GET PROVINCIAL GRADE 12 EXAMINATION RESULTS?

On the registration form the student can indicate up to three British Columbia post-secondary institutions to which the student wishes the results to be sent. The Ministry will issue the student's Provincial Examination mark, the school mark and the final standing. Additional copies of student results will be the responsibility of the School.

11. WHO HAS ACCESS TO PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION INFORMATION FROM THE MINISTRY?

The Ministry will provide individual student data to the Post-Secondary Institutions only when requested by students at the time of examination registration.

The district, individual school, and pupil results will be made available to School Superintendents. In the case of Group 2 Independent schools, the principal will receive school, and individual student results.

Release of district and/or school results will be an option of the district.

Except as noted, individual student results will remain confidential.

12. WHAT IF A STUDENT FAILS AN EXAMINABLE COURSE?

If a student fails an examinable subject, there are two options available. The student could rewrite the examination at a subsequent sitting or, the student could repeat the course and take the examination again.

It should be noted that:

- if the student does not repeat the course, his previous school mark will remain the official school mark,
- if a student does repeat the course and rewrites the examination, he will receive an entirely new set of marks,

For semestered schools, it is recognized that final marks will be issued after the start of the second semester. For those students who fail and wish to repeat a course, schools will need to make appropriate timetable adjustments upon receipt of final marks.

13. WHAT IS THE APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS?

If public school students disagree with the marks awarded by schools on any course they can go through the local appeal procedure as described in the Administrative Handbook (page 517-g-1). Appeal procedures in Independent schools, for marks awarded by those schools, will be established by each independent authority.

In view of the stringent marking and checking procedures established there will be no re-marking of individual examinations.

However, if students question the results on the Provincial Examinations they may request that the principal submit a written appeal to the Provincial Board of Examiners.

14. WHAT IS THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS?

A Board of Examiners will be established in accordance with Section 17(d) of the School Act. The Board will provide consultation to the Ministry on the matters related to Examinations and will adjudicate any special requests or appeals regarding Grade 12 Provincial or Scholarship Examinations.

15. WHAT ABOUT SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS HANDICAPPED STUDENTS OR ILLNESSES?

Special circumstances fall into two categories; those that are predictable such as a sight-impaired student who the principal knows will require special consideration, and those that are unpredictable such as a death in the family or sudden illness.

In either case the following procedure is required:

- 1) The principal of the school is to send a letter to the Ministry requesting that the Board of Examiners adjudicate the concern;

Board of Examiners
Ministry of Education
Scholarship and Student Assessment Programs
Parliament Buildings
VICTORIA BC V8V 2M4

- 2) The letter should include a description of the problem or disability and include any supporting documentation;

- 6.
- 3) As well, a recommendation should be outlined for the consideration of the Board of Examiners;

In the circumstances that are predictable, the information should be submitted at the time of registration.

For those special circumstances that are unpredictable, the principal is to forward the letter, documentation, and recommendation as soon as possible after the examination.

16. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY?

Security procedures for the Provincial Examinations will parallel those currently in effect for Scholarship Examinations. The Superintendent or designated Independent schools authority has the overall responsibility to ensure that security procedures are in place.

Within the school, the principal assumes the responsibility for examination procedures. The principal may, however, appoint a "Supervisor-in-charge".

Instructions about specific procedures will be sent to superintendents and principals at a later date.

All invigilators must be certified teachers but may not, however, be teachers of the subject under examination.

17. WHERE WILL THE EXAMINATION CENTRES BE?

All public schools enrolling Grade 12 will act as examination centres in January and June.

Selected, funded (Group 2) Independent schools may also be designated as examination centres.

Examination centres and dates for supplementals in August will be decided at a later date.

18. WILL COPIES OF THE JANUARY EXAMINATIONS BE RELEASED?

In February, resource sets of the Provincial Examinations will be made available to all schools.

19. DO CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS WRITE THESE PROVINCIAL EXAMINATIONS?

An examination schedule is already an integral part of the correspondence program. With correspondence students there will be no change from the present policy. Since students will continue to write the Grade 12 Provincial Correspondence Examinations, they will not be required to write the new Provincial Examinations. However, if a correspondence student wants to write for a scholarship, the student would have to write both the Provincial and the Scholarship Examinations (as the scholarship mark is a composite of the two tests) in addition to the regular correspondence examinations.

20. WILL ADULT SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BE INCLUDED?

For this year, students enrolled in the Adult Secondary School Program (Adult Interrupted Program) will not be eligible to write Provincial Examinations.

Adults enrolled in regular day school classes in a secondary school will be required to write respective examinations.

Day school students electing to enrol in a night school class will be required to write the respective Provincial Examination.

21. WILL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS BE INCLUDED?

As previously stated, students enrolled in Group 2 Independent Schools are required to write the Grade 12 Provincial Examinations. A final decision has not been made as yet as to whether or not students registered in Group 1 and nonfunded Independent Schools will be permitted to write Provincial Examinations. A clarifying statement will be made in the near future.

22. CAN STUDENTS USE CALCULATORS?

For Algebra, Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics only, students are permitted to use silent, handheld, non-printing calculators which do not have the capacity to process alpha-numeric strings.

The intent of this regulation is to permit the use of aids for numeric calculations but to prohibit the use of micro-computors and electronic translators which allow input, storage and/or retrieval of written information.

Students should be made aware of these regulations sufficiently in advance to allow them to obtain a suitable calculator if they so desire. It should be noted that all examinations are developed with the intent that calculators are not required in order to successfully complete the examination.

EXPANDED TABLES OF SPECIFICATIONS

FOR GRADE 12 PROVINCIAL AND SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATIONS

The purpose of this attachment* is to ensure that teachers of the examinable subjects are informed about the content of each Examination. Included is an expanded description of the content and weighting information about each of the forthcoming examinations. Where differences occur in the present circular and circular No. 06 (83.09.02), the present circular prevails.

The following should be noted:

- Provincial Examinations are two hours long with the exception of English 12 which will be three hours long;
- students writing for French Scholarships will have an additional one hour auditory examination;
- scholarship marks will be derived by combining the scores from the Provincial and the Scholarship component of the examination;
- students should be made aware of the regulations about calculators outlined in Attachment 3 of this circular. It should be noted that all examinations are developed with the intent that calculators are not required in order to successfully complete the examination;
- in all language courses except for Latin special consideration must be given to the weighting in the school mark since it is not possible to measure all communication skills on a paper and pencil examination. The school mark should therefore reflect appropriate weightings for achievement in speaking and listening.
- new examinations will be produced for each sitting; however, the Table of Specifications attached will remain consistent for 1984.

* The specification tables are available on request from
the Director of Admissions.