INSTITUTE OF CANADIAN EDUCATION

Substitution for Compulsory Credits Policy 2026 - 2027

The Institute of Canadian Education may replace up to three of a student's compulsory credit requirements with courses from other subject areas. Substitutions are made only when they serve the student's educational interests.
This policy explains when a substitution may be made, which credits can and cannot be substituted, the steps to request one, and how it is recorded.

2. Ministry authority

This policy implements the following Ministry of Education requirements:

- Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2024, section 6.2 (Substitutions for compulsory credit requirements) and section 6.1 (OSSD compulsory credits).
- Policy/Program Memorandum 132 — limits on substitutions for mature students.

Where this policy and Ministry policy differ, Ministry policy prevails.

3.Definitions

- **Compulsory credit** — a credit the Ministry requires for the OSSD. Students who entered Grade 9 in 2024–25 or later need 17 compulsory credits. Students who entered Grade 9 in 2023 or earlier need 18.
- **Substitution** — replacing a compulsory credit requirement with a credit from another subject area, so that the substitute course counts as compulsory.
- **Substitute course** — the course used in place of the compulsory requirement. It counts once, toward the requirement it replaces.

4.Rules and limits

- Maximum: a student may have up to three compulsory credit requirements substituted over their whole secondary program, including substitutions made at another school.
- Half credits: two half-credit courses may replace one compulsory credit. One full-credit course may replace the two half-credit requirements (Civics and Citizenship and Career Studies). Each of these counts as one substitution.
- Who decides: the Principal, in consultation with the parent/guardian or adult student and appropriate school staff.

- Who may request: a parent/guardian, an adult student, or the Principal may start a request.
- Substitute courses: must be credits from another subject area that the student has earned or will earn. A substitute course cannot also count toward another compulsory requirement.
- Students with an IEP: substitutions are considered as part of the student's IEP and transition planning where appropriate.

5.Restrictions

The following cannot be used as substitutes, or cannot be substituted:

- ESL and ELD courses cannot be used as substitutes for compulsory credits. They may only count toward up to three of the four compulsory English credits, with the fourth earned in a Grade 12 compulsory English course.
- Learning strategies courses (guidance and career education): no more than one may be used as a substitute.
- Cooperative education credits cannot be used as substitutes for compulsory credits.
- College-delivered dual credit courses cannot be used as substitutes for compulsory credits.
- Locally developed compulsory courses may only meet the compulsory requirement they were developed for.
- Mature students: the Grade 12 English and the Grade 11 or 12 mathematics compulsory credits cannot be substituted (PPM 132).

The following are not compulsory credits and are not handled through substitution:

- the secondary school literacy requirement (OSSLT or OSSLC)
- the online learning graduation requirement, which has its own opt-out process under PPM 167
- the 40 hours of community involvement

6. Step-by-step procedure

1. **Request**
   - The parent/guardian or adult student completes the ICE Request for Substitution of Compulsory Credit form and gives it to the Guidance Office. The Principal may also start a request.
   - The form names the compulsory requirement to be replaced, the proposed substitute course, and the reason.

2. **Guidance review**
   - The Guidance Counsellor checks the student's OST and credit history: how many substitutions the student already has, whether the requirement can be substituted, and whether the substitute course meets section 5.
   - The Counsellor confirms the student will still meet all OSSD (or OSSC) requirements after the substitution.

3. **Consultation**
   - The Principal meets with the student, the parent/guardian (or adult student), the Guidance Counsellor and relevant teachers. For students with an IEP, the special education teacher is included.

4. **Decision**
   - The Principal approves or declines the request in writing within 10 school days of receiving a complete request, with reasons.

5. **Recording and follow-up**
   - If approved, the substitution is recorded on the OST and the signed form is filed in the OSR.
   - The Counsellor updates the student's credit plan and gives a copy to the student and parent/guardian.

Documentation and recording

- **OST**: every substitution is noted on the student's Ontario Student Transcript, as set out in the OST Manual. The substitute course is identified as meeting the compulsory requirement it replaces.
- **OSR**: the signed request form, the Principal's written decision and the reasons are filed in the student's Ontario Student Record.
- **Transfers**: substitutions made at another Ontario school are honoured as recorded on the OST and count toward the limit of three.

Roles and responsibilities

- **Principal**: decides on every substitution, may start a request, signs the decision, and ensures the limits and restrictions in this policy are followed.
- **Guidance Counsellor:** advises students and families, reviews credit history, prepares the request for the Principal, records the substitution on the OST, files documents in the OSR, and updates the credit plan.
- **Teachers** (including special education): give input on the student's learning needs and on whether the substitute course is suitable.