



High School Planning Options for ursa Home-Based Education Students

ursa students have several different options for approaching the high school years. High school plans vary widely between students with different post-secondary or career goals. Some students choose to pursue a full Alberta High School diploma, while others only earn credits in some courses. Others forgo earning credits as they follow their interests and work toward their goals in other ways.

No Credits

Parent Directed students following the Alberta Home Education Learning Outcomes choose their own topics to study using various methods, curriculums, or materials. Students following this path will not earn high school credits. Some students may eventually choose to upgrade, take a GED or SAT, or create a portfolio to enter a post-secondary institution. Students and their parents are responsible for researching the requirements for any post-secondary institutions so that they can determine the best path to reach their goals.

Credits

Credits for courses are earned when the Alberta Learning Goals of Education are met by following the Alberta Program of Studies. Students can choose to achieve an Alberta High School Diploma (100 credits) or an Alberta Certificate of High School Achievement (80 credits) by completing the required courses. Other students may choose to only earn credits in the courses that will be needed for their chosen post-secondary program, without achieving an Alberta High School Diploma. Post-secondary prerequisites vary between faculties & schools, as well as by age; it is highly recommended that you research entrance requirements to any post-secondary schools your student wants to attend.

ursa students can earn credit for courses in a number of ways.

- A. ursa Distance Learning** – **ursa** distance learning provides full time online Teacher Directed programming with the option of some in-person classes at our Calgary location. **ursa** Distance may be beneficial for students seeking a full high school diploma. The parent supports the student and a teacher delivers the program. **ursa** Distance is taught by experienced online teachers, and class sizes are kept small. High school students completing 29 credits or more Teacher

Directed courses per year are considered **ursa** distance students.

- B. **ursa Shared** – Shared Responsibility provides students the flexibility of taking some courses with an **ursa** teacher and while also doing some courses/subjects through parent-directed home education. The Parent Directed portion of a student’s program may include courses for credit, but may also involve a student learning in areas outside of the Alberta Program of Studies. Shared Responsibility can be a good option for students looking for choice and flexibility when working towards a full high school diploma or to achieve credits in specific courses needed for post-secondary admission. Shared responsibility students complete 7 to 28 teacher-directed credits per year.
- C. **ursa Parent Directed Students taking online courses** – Students in grades 10 to 12 can access online or in person courses to earn up to 5 credits per year while remaining registered as Parent Directed students. This is an excellent way to take courses that would be challenging for a parent to administer. Contact your Home Education Manager for more information and an application. Students may also be able to access these 5 credits through other boards, while still remaining an **ursa** parent-directed student. Note, Parent Directed students can only access up to 5 credits total during the year.
- D. **Teacher Directed Courses or Camps during the summer.** - Some boards provide courses for credit during the summer. This is separate from your registration at ursa during the school year, and does not count toward the 5 credits per year mentioned above. Contact the school or organization offering the courses to find out about the registration requirements and deadlines.
- E. **ursa Parent Directed Courses for Credit** – Section 6 of the Alberta Home Education Regulation states: “On the recommendation of a school principal, a student receiving a home education program that follows the Alberta Program of Study is eligible to receive high school credits if the student achieves the course standards and outcomes prescribed by the Minister.”

For a student to earn credits this way, the parent is responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating a course that meets the Alberta Program of Studies. Students are often most successful when using a combination of Teacher Directed credits and Parent Directed credits. It is challenging to complete a full 100 credits by earning only Parent Directed credits, and this process is recommended only for students who work well independently and whose parents have the desire, time and ability to research, design, implement and evaluate a given course.

Within the parameters set out by Alberta Education for each course found in the



Alberta Program of Studies, students in high school are able to incorporate their interests into their plan to achieve high school credits. **ursa** supports and encourages students in taking charge of their learning, developing ways to exercise self-determination and agency, and expressing their personal creativity and passions in ways that will also allow them to meet the objectives or outcomes specified in the Alberta Program of Studies.

We recommend that students start with one to two core courses, and possibly one option, and progress from there. Students are encouraged to focus on completing just a few courses at a time in order to keep their course load manageable. This also allows parents time to design courses, find resources, create activities and assignments for the student to complete, and to evaluate each course.

The first step is to let your Home Education Manager (HEM) know which course you want to do. HEMs have course outlines for the four core academic areas (ELA, Math, Science, & Social Studies,) as well as other popular courses, such as Phys Ed, CALM and Special Projects. A course outline summarizes the learning outcomes from the Alberta Program of Studies, and helps guide you in the creation or writing of a proposal, which is your plan for the course. For other courses, such as in the arts or CTS courses like Foods or Computer Science, your HEM will direct you to the Alberta Education learning outcomes, and may have some sample proposals for you to work from.

Course proposals must be approved by the **ursa** team prior to beginning Parent Directed courses for credit. This is to ensure that the student does not spend considerable time working on projects that will not be applicable to the course.

After completing the course, students send their portfolio to their HEM to be reviewed by an **ursa** team, and the assigned mark will be confirmed or appropriately changed. Core subjects (English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Sciences) will include an **ursa** provided and supervised final exam worth 20% of the overall grade.

AB High School Diploma Requirements

Students in school typically take three years to earn 100 credits and complete their Alberta High School Diploma. Conversely, **ursa** homeschooled students often begin senior high parent-directed or online courses for credit in grade 9, and can continue with their high school work as long as they are 19-years-old or younger as of September 1st. This allows students a lighter course load each year.

The [Alberta High School Diploma Graduation Requirements](#) outline the required courses and number of credits needed to obtain a diploma. Please ask your HEM if you would like help in planning which courses your student will take.

A complete list of courses for credit available to high school students can be found here: [Alberta Provincially Authorized Senior High School Courses and Course Codes](#).

Beginning High School Courses for Credit While in Junior High

Eligible junior high students may begin to take some senior high school courses for credit early, most often in grade 9. Many students start with a 1000-level beginner Career and Technology Studies (CTS) course, Physical Education, or Art. Junior high students may also work on a core course, if they are ready for the material and workload.

Students may **NOT** earn credit for the following courses before completing grade 9:

- o Career and Life Management (CALM)
- o intermediate-level (2000 series) and advanced-level (3000 series) CTS courses
- o Special Projects 10, 20 and 30