

COURSE PLANNING MANUAL: PART ONE

HOW TO CHOOSE COURSES

READ THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING TO

PART TWO: BUILDING YOUR SCHEDULE & REGISTERING

This document contains all of the necessary information you require to select courses appropriate for your program. All of the necessary Links you require can be found in the “2. Tools & Links.”

ACADEMIC PLANNING GUIDES

REVIEW THE ACADEMIC PLANNING GUIDE for your program/transfer university. Each guide contains the following information:

- **Program requirements** - components which make up the full degree
- **Course requirements** – specific or “core” courses
- **Suggested sequence of courses** – in what order courses should be taken
- **Majors and minors** – understand the difference and think about your choices
- **Options or Electives** – parameters for choosing these
- **Lowest transferable grades** – specific to courses, programs and universities
- **Repetition of courses** – retaking courses
- **University transfer admission requirements**
- **Residency requirement** – the maximum number of courses which may be transferred
- **Application deadlines** for admission to university programs
- **Key contacts:** emails, phone numbers and websites for academic advisors, your RDC program chairperson, university faculty and department to which your degree transfers.

... REGARDING ALL OF THE ABOVE

Each major, minor, faculty & university can be different from others.

- **Always check the academic planning guide specific to your program.**
- **Always check with an advisor if you change your major, minor or transfer school.**

UNDERSTANDING THE DETAILS on planning guides:

- ***3, (3), 3 credits, and half-course equivalent** all mean the same thing: the credit weight of the course is three. A *3 course is usually 15 weeks long.
- ***6, (6), 6 credits, and full-course equivalent** all mean the same thing: the credit weight of the course is six. A *6 course is usually 30 weeks long (Sept. to April) and requires a student to register in the Fall half of the course and the Winter half of the course (i.e. POLI 200A for Fall and POLI 200AA for Winter).
- **Course, Class:** have the same meaning, e.g. ENGLISH 219 can be called a course or a class
- **Subject, Field of Study, Academic Discipline:** are used interchangeably, e.g. to refer to the broader area of ENGLISH.
- **Jr. or Junior** means the course must transfer to your destination university at a junior level; **Sr. or Senior** means the course must transfer to your destination university at a senior-level. If your guide contains these terms, they will be further explained specific to your destination university.

- **Footnotes** are used to give more information about a specific course in your program or a course choice you need to make, etc. For example, *BIOL 317*¹ or *ARTS OPTION*^{Note 4} notify you to find the corresponding note with important information.
- **The big picture:** the planning guides contain admission and program information found in the university calendar for a specific academic year (July 1 - June 30). To see how the first year or two years at RDC are part of your overall degree, refer to the university calendar online. Each guide is updated annually (January to March) and, if the university makes a change during the year, the guide is updated to reflect that change. This does occur, but not frequently. Make sure the guide you are using is the current one.

CHOOSING OPTIONS

Most post-secondary programs include course requirements called options (or electives). These are an opportunity to expand your knowledge base and to explore areas outside of your major or minor in which you are also interested. Some Bachelor of Science and preprofessional programs do not have options in the first year of study.

There are specific types of options. You may see one or more of the following:

- open options (or free electives) which generally means you can choose a course in any subject as long as the course transfers for credit in your program and to your university
- specified to be chosen from a particular faculty, e.g. an Arts Option or Science Option
- chosen from within a specific subject, e.g. a junior English option
- chosen from within specific courses, e.g. *6 in: CHEM 212, 351, 352, PHYS 205, 226
- in any subject except the major, e.g. a Non-Business Option

HOW TO CHOOSE OPTIONS:

- Unless your planning guide states differently, option courses do not have to relate directly to your major subject area.
- If you are having trouble choosing an option, take a risk! This is a great opportunity to start learning something new.
- It is recommended that new students take introductory level courses for options in the first year. These are courses which are numbered in the 200's.
- If a course you wish to take has a prerequisite, you will need to figure out the sequence in which you can take the courses so you can work your way towards the course you want (i.e. ENGL 219 in one term and ENGL 220 in another before taking FILM 201).
- Check each specific course in the Alberta Transfer Guide to see if it transfers for credit in your program and to your university.

THE ALBERTA TRANSFER GUIDE

This is an essential tool for all students in university transfer programs. The Alberta Transfer Guide governs how courses transfer from RDC (and other Alberta post-secondary institutions) to Alberta universities. The Guide is available in hardcopy from Advising Centre and also on-line. It is updated annually and also throughout the year as new agreements are approved. The on-line version is recommended as it will include the most up-to-date information.

WHAT'S IN THE TRANSFER GUIDE?

- The transfer guide is arranged by “sending institution” – if you are an RDC student, RDC is the sending institution, ie the institution you want to transfer from. The university to which you intend to transfer is the “receiving institution.”
- The most common search is for a specific course. In the “key word or phrase” area, enter the abbreviated title of the course exactly as it’s found in the RDC timetable. For example, Anthropology 203 is entered as “ANTH 203”; Family Studies 322 is entered as “FAM 322.”
- Using RDC’s Math 202 as an example, you will see a list of schools to which this course transfers, as well as the course for which you will receive credit at that institution. Math 202 transfers to UofA as MATH 113, to UofC as MATH 251, and to UofL as MATH 1560.
- **Click on the Link to see further details for each agreement.** Carefully review any footnotes for transfer conditions that may apply. For example, BUS 303 shows transfer to UofC as “HROD 321 (3)”. When you click on the course link the footnote says, *not accepted for credit towards Bachelor of Commerce degree*. Make sure you don’t miss important footnotes!

The screenshot shows the ACAT website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: View, Favorites, Tools, Help. Below that, the page title is 'ACAT - Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer'. The main content area is titled 'Search Results - Transfer From'. It displays the following information:

- Selected Institution:** (institution you want to transfer from) **Red Deer College**
- Selected Academic Year:** (year you took your course or program) **2010 - 2011**
- Selected Courses/Programs:** **MATH 202 Elementary Calculus I**

Below this, it says 'Transfer Agreements Found' and lists 'Red Deer College MATH 202 - Elementary Calculus I'. A box titled 'Transfer agreements with the following institutions:' contains a list of links to other institutions and their corresponding course numbers, with a red arrow pointing to the list:

- [Athabasca University: MATH 265 \(3\)](#)
- [Canadian University College: MATH 2xx \(3\)](#)
- [Concordia University College of Alberta: MAT 113 \(3\)](#)
- [King's University College, The: MATH 200 \(3\)](#)
- [Southern Alberta Institute of Technology: MATH 235 \(3\)](#)
- [University of Alberta: MATH 113 \(3\) OR AUMAT 110 \(3\)](#)
- [University of Calgary: MATH 251 \(3\)](#)
- [University of Lethbridge, The: MATH 1560 \(3\)](#)

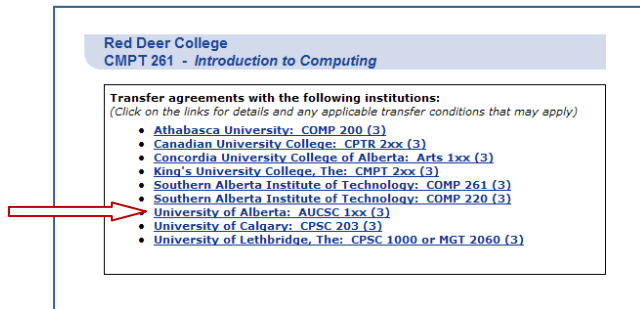
On the right side of the page, there are sections for 'RELATED INFORMATION' (Students Finance, Educational Programs, Apprenticeship and Industry Training), 'CONTACT' (Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) contact info), and 'USEFUL LINKS' (Admissions to Post Secondary, Alberta Student Number, High School Transcripts).

- **Unspecified transfer credit:** The manner in which a course transfers to a university that does not offer the exact same course. For example, RDC’s *PHIL 201* transfers to UofC as *Jr. PHIL*. It is not assigned a course number because UofC does not have a philosophy course with the same curriculum (course equivalent) but they recognize it is a university transferable course in the same subject so it is accepted as unspecified credit in junior-level philosophy. Other universities show unspecified credit just a little differently. Unspecified credit in philosophy is shown at UofC as *Jr. PHIL* or *Sr. PHIL*; at UofA as *PHIL 1xx*, *PHIL 2xx*, etc. and at UofL as *PHIL 1xxx*, *PHIL 2xxx*, etc.
- **Number of transfer credits awarded** by the receiving institution, e.g. 1.5, 3, 6, etc.
- Whether a course transfers to each Alberta university, for an example, look up *FAM 322*.
- If there are **transfer conditions** for the course, look up *BUS 303* to check the footnote for an example.
- **Block transfer agreements** between RDC and Alberta post-secondary institutions, e.g. Biological Sciences, Social Work Diploma, Visual Art Diploma, etc.
- **Acceptance of IB and AP courses** by Alberta universities.

- **Which high school upgrading courses are accepted** for admission requirements by other Alberta post-secondary institutions, e.g. Chemistry 95 is accepted in lieu of Chemistry 30, Math 85 is not accepted in lieu of Applied Math 30, etc.
- **Alberta Education course equivalents** for out-of-province high school courses.
- A **glossary** of terms.

A note about University of Alberta transfer:

Courses that show transfer to UofA with a prefix of *AU* indicate that the course transfers to UofA's Augustana Faculty in Camrose, Alberta only. If a course you look up only shows transfer with *AU* in front of the course it is not accepted for credit by any other UofA faculty (i.e. Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, etc.). For example, the transfer for *CMPT 261* appears as follows:



CMPT 261 will transfer to programs offered by Augustana campus ONLY.

If the course transfers as two different courses to UofA, one with an AU prefix and one without, it is accepted for credit by Augustana Faculty and other UofA faculties (check to see if transfer conditions may apply). *ECON 201* transfers to UofA as *ECON 101* and *AUECO 101*.

COURSE LOAD

Consider the points below when selecting courses and building your schedule:

- **The maximum course load** per term is *15 per term. This may be different for some majors, e.g. Kinesiology.
- **Full-time study** is three to five 3-credit post-secondary courses in a Fall or Winter term and two or three 3-credit courses in a Spring term. Three courses in a Spring term is a very heavy course load.
- **Part-time study** is considered one or two 3-credit post-secondary courses in a Fall or Winter term and one 3-credit course in a Spring term.
- If you take one **upgrading course** in Fall or Winter, you may take a maximum of three 3-credit post-secondary courses in that term. If you take two upgrading courses in those terms, you may take a maximum of two post-secondary courses per term. Always check with the RDC Funding & Awards office if you are receiving a student loan/scholarship/bursary and also taking upgrading courses.
- **A minimum of nine post-secondary credits and three courses are required in each Fall and Winter term to meet Alberta or Canada student loan requirements for full-time study.** If you anticipate receiving one or both of these loans, register in and maintain a minimum of *9 in both Fall and Winter terms. If you will have loans from another province or agency, make sure your registration complies with their requirements. **Scholarships and bursaries** often have different minimum course load requirements. Always check with the Student Funding & Awards Office.
- It is important to check with an academic advisor if you plan to take **Spring term courses** in the year you wish to apply to university (i.e. Spring 11 for Fall 11) because this is not often advisable. The Spring term does not end in time for your official Spring grades to be received by the university by the transcript deadline.

- To complete a **four year degree** (*120) within four years, you need to successfully complete ten 3-credit courses (*30) per year in four consecutive academic years, i.e. 5 courses per term over 8 terms.
- Many programs allow students to attend part-time or with fewer than five courses per term. The planning guide will clearly state if university admission requirements for your program do not allow this.
- Admission requirements for some programs require a minimum course load per term or per academic year (usually with a minimum GPA requirement) that must be met to be eligible to apply. The academic planning guide will clearly state these requirements when they exist.
- If a minimum course load and/or grade point average (GPA) is required per term or per academic year(s) for the degree program to which you will apply, it is imperative you meet those requirements to be eligible to apply.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for organizing and enjoying their own educational experience. This includes the responsibility of ensuring that your registration is complete and appropriate and that your courses comply with the program to which you have been admitted at RDC and to the university to which you intend to transfer.

You can do this successfully by:

- Doing your own course planning, scheduling, and registration. It's good to seek advice from friends and family but remember that doing your own research and planning is also a great learning opportunity and, ultimately, it is your experience.
- Following the current academic planning guide for your program and transfer university
- Registering in courses appropriate for your program and transfer university
- Registering in Fall *and* Winter courses when you become eligible to register
- Meeting with an academic advisor to ask questions and discuss any changes you may want to make to your selection of courses, major, program, or destination university
- Asking an academic advisor when you have questions about course transfer, graduation requirements, if your courses fit your program, university admission requirements, your academic status, dropping or withdrawing from courses,...
- Becoming familiar with the calendar for your destination university
- Following the Academic Schedule
- Using the resources available in the Counselling, Career, and Learning Centre and the Writing Skills Centre
- Applying for recognition of prior learning *well before the beginning of your first term* if you took courses at other post-secondary institutions.
- Accepting responsibility for all your decisions

ADVISORS WOULD LIKE TO HELP YOU WITH THIS -- it's important that you meet with one of us if you have any questions. Examples of reasons to see an advisor are:

- You are having trouble making decisions relevant to your education.
- You are thinking about changing programs or transferring to a university that is different from when you did your original planning. Courses and requirements can sometimes differ substantially if you change your university goal, even if you stay in the same program.
- You have questions about course transferability, course pre-requisites, entrance requirements, program requirements, graduation requirements, application processes, or academic policy.
- You are unsure of what support services are available.
- Don't make assumptions -- double check with us.

We are available on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday. Call 403.342.3400 to check specific hours.

**PROCEED TO PART TWO OF THE COURSE PLANNING MANUAL:
HOW TO BUILD YOUR SCHEDULE.**
