Open Studies

220 Open Studies

220.1 Definition

Open Studies students are students registered in selected credit courses and/or courses for audit but who are not in a specific degree or diploma program.

220.2 Admission and Registration

Admission and registration in Open Studies are administered by Special Registrations, Office of the Registrar and the Dean of Students.

220.2.1 Application and Admission

(1) Application: Applicants may apply for admission using the online or PDF application at www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca. A nonrefundable fee must accompany each application. Documentation of past education is usually not required; see (2) below.

For registration in Fall Term, Applications must be received by August 31.
Winter Term, December 15
Spring Term, April 30
Summer Term, June 30

(2) Language Proficiency: See §13 for further information. For admission purposes, documentation may be required to confirm that English Language Proficiency has been met.

(3) “Required to Withdraw”: Students who have been required to withdraw from Open Studies at the University of Alberta may not apply to Open Studies for a period of twelve months from the date of last attendance.

Students who have been required to withdraw more than once from Open Studies for a period of twelve months from the date of last attendance.

Students who have been required to withdraw from Open Studies at the University of Alberta may not apply to Open Studies for unsatisfactory academic performance must seek advice from the Department offering that course.

Language Proficiency has been met.

Students registered in these initiatives may be registered in more than 6 per term. Exceptions to this are for the following University of Alberta initiatives:

a. Fresh Start Program
b. Transition Year Program
c. Visiting Student Certificate Program
d. Exceptional Student Athlete Applicants

(2) Cumulative Course Weight: Normally, 30 may be completed in Open Studies.

(3) Fall/Winter: The registration period for Fall/Winter begins in mid-March for continuing students and in April for newly admitted students. The courses which are available to Open Studies students are designated in the Course Listings (§23) by the symbol. Some courses are available on a delayed registration basis only and are designated by the symbol. Registration for such courses is permitted the last week in August. See §11. Students requesting a course other than the approved courses must obtain consent from the Department offering that course.

Most courses can be added by using the Bear Tracks web registration system. Please refer to the Registration and Courses menu at www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca for details and registration information and deadlines.

(4) Spring/Summer: Open Studies students wishing to register in Spring/Summer should consult Spring/Summer Studies at www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca and the Course and Class Information on Bear Tracks (https://www.beartracks.ualberta.ca)

(5) Fees are assessed and are due and payable in accordance with the fees regulations set out in §222.

(6) Open Studies students wishing to audit courses must follow §22.1.10. Fresh Start Program students and Exceptional Student Athletes are not permitted to register as Auditors or to change from credit to audit. In addition to instructor consent, audit registrations for Open Studies students are subject to the permission of Special Registrations. Audit registrations will not be counted in the term course load maximum nor the cumulative course weight maximum. Audit registrations do not contribute to full-time student status.

220.2.3 Student Responsibility

Students are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of their registration. They are also responsible for adjustments in registration made necessary by changes to their academic status.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have the necessary prerequisites and corequisites for courses. Refer to §§22.1.4 and 22.1.5 for more information.

220.2.4 Changes in Registration

Changes in registration may be made without penalty until the end of the registration period. After this deadline, students who wish to add courses (if permitted), withdraw from courses, or withdraw from the University must complete the appropriate forms at the Office of the Registrar (see §11 for further information). Students may not abandon a course; failure to properly withdraw may result in the assignment of a failing grade.

220.3 Academic Standing

(1) Assessment of Academic Standing: Academic standing will be assessed on the basis of a grade point average (GPA). Refer to §23.4(7) for rules of computation of the GPA. Students are expected to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0. Students who do not maintain this level of academic performance may be permitted to continue under academic warning or may be required to withdraw. A review of academic performance is conducted for each student at the end of each Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer. The assignment and reassignment of categories of academic standing are based on a student’s performance in a minimum of 9 within Open Studies. If, at the time of the first review, the student has attempted fewer than 9 within Open Studies, the assignment of an academic standing category will be deferred until a minimum of 9 has been attempted within Open Studies. Subsequent assessments will be made once a further 9 has been attempted within Open Studies and will be based upon only the courses attempted within Open Studies since the previous assessment. If, at the time of review, a student has attempted fewer than 9 since the last assignment of an academic standing category, the review will be deferred and the academic standing assigned at the last review will remain in effect until the next review.

(2) Categories of Academic Standing:

Satisfactory Standing: Students with a GPA of 2.0 or greater may continue in Open Studies.
Marginal Standing: Students with a GPA of 1.7 to 1.9 inclusive will be placed under academic warning. If the student’s GPA falls below 2.0 at the time of the next review, the student will be required to withdraw.

Unsatisfactory Standing: Students with a GPA of 1.6 or below will be required to withdraw from Open Studies.

(3) Reexaminations: See §23.5.5.

220.4 Appeals

Procedures exist to enable Open Studies students to appeal certain decisions regarding academic and nonacademic matters. Formal appeals are often avoidable and students are therefore encouraged, in the first instance, to seek advice from the Assistant Registrar, Records, Registration and Fees.

(1) Grade Appeals: Students who wish to appeal a ruling relating to a grade, examination result or standing in a particular course should consult the appeals policy of the Faculty offering the course.

(2) Discipline Offences: Students who wish to appeal a discipline offence ruling (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) should follow the procedures stated in the Code of Student Behavior (see §26).

(3) Academic Standing: Open Studies students who wish to appeal a decision affecting their academic standing as described in §220.3 should direct their appeal in the first instance to the Associate Registrar, Records, Registration and Fees. Copies of the Open Studies academic appeal procedures and regulations are available from the Office of the Registrar.

See also §23.8 for a discussion of General Faculties Council policies regarding appeals and grievances.

220.5 Fresh Start Program

The Fresh Start Program makes it possible for students in participating Faculties to remain on campus while attempting to re-establish satisfactory standing and regain eligibility for readmission to the Faculty in which they were originally registered or to another Faculty.

Students may not apply directly to Fresh Start, they must be recommended originally registered or to another Faculty.

Students who are assigned unsatisfactory standing and are required to withdraw (RTW), will have agreed in advance to such an arrangement.

Students who do not maintain satisfactory academic standing will be required to withdraw and will not be considered for readmission to the University of Alberta.

220.6 Visiting Student Certificate Program

The Visiting Student Certificate Program (VSCP) is a unique program which allows international students whose home university academic records have specified a minimum and/or maximum number of courses to be taken in a given time period.

(1) The Visiting Student Certificate Program is offered through the Office of the Registrar, Open Studies in concert with the International Centre, International Student Services (ISS). International Student Services will assist in the program’s administration, student recruitment, ongoing student advising, and support services.

(2) Students in the Visiting Student Certificate Program are bona fide students of other universities or colleges who have been permitted to take one or more courses for transfer credit to their own institutions. The Institutions will have agreed in advance to such an arrangement.

Document Requirements:

a. Completed VSCP application form with a signature from an official of the student’s home institution;

b. An official transcript (in English translation) of all completed course work;

c. A letter of support from a professor at the student’s home institution;

d. TOEFL score, if available

(3) The Visiting Student Certificate Program is designed to accommodate the participation of international students whose home university academic calendars are not synchronous with the University of Alberta’s Calendar.
There are four possible start dates: May 1, July 1, September 1 and January 1. 

Note: The application deadlines are January 15 for a May 1 start, April 15 for a July 1 start, June 15 for a September 1 start and October 15 for a January 1 start.

(4) Students participate in the English Language Program (ELP) at the Faculty of Extension during the first two to four months of the Visiting Student Certificate Program.

(5) After the initial period of participation in intensive English language instruction, students move to regular academic work for either credit or audit depending on their performance in the English Language Program and the assessment of the Academic Advisor. Students may take up to 9 credits in each subsequent academic term. If students have successfully completed EAP 145 they can take 15 credits in each subsequent academic term.

Students can take EAP 140, 145 for credit.

a. If EAP 140 is successfully completed during the English Language Program portion of the VSCP, the student would earn 3 credits. (See §94.4, English Language Program.)

b. If EAP 140 and 145 are successfully completed during the English Language Program portion of the VSCP, the student would earn 6 credits.

Subject to the approval of the academic advisor, students enrolled in EAP 140 or 145 for credit during the English Language Program portion of the VSCP can take up to 6 additional academic credits during that term. All credits earned during the English Language Program portion of the VSCP are in addition to the credits the student can earn during each of the subsequent academic terms.

(6) Students must maintain satisfactory academic standing as specified in §220.3 while registered in the Visiting Student Certificate Program.

(7) Students receive a Certificate of Participation in the Visiting Student Certificate Program and a U of A transcript. Transfer credit to their undergraduate degree is granted by their home institution.

To receive a Certificate of Participation, students must complete the intensive daytime English Language Program and write the post-test, take at least one regular academic course for credit or audit, demonstrate satisfactory attendance in all classes, complete all assignments and exams, participate in an extracurricular commitment, attend all VSCP meetings and interviews, and have no outstanding fees or fines to the University of Alberta.

220.7 Exceptional Student Athlete Applicants

Prospective students who do not meet the normal admission requirements for entrance to degree programs may be considered for admission under this category. Successful applicants will be approved to register as Open Studies students in a maximum of 12 per term. If granted, this approval will be permitted for a maximum of one Fall and Winter term only, after which students must apply to a degree program in order to continue.

220.7.1 Admission Requirements for Exceptional Student Athlete Applicants

(1) All applicants must meet the admission criteria for Open Studies as stated in §220.2.1, as well as that for Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) eligibility, and must consult with Faculties that they intend to apply for following their Open Studies registration.

(2) All applicants must display a level of sport performance that

a. can be documented objectively by an independent external source (i.e., league commissioner, national team coaching staff) and possess athletic prowess that would be acceptable to any CIS participating institution

b. requires a minimum annual average of 15 training/competition hours per week in the year immediately before application to the University of Alberta.

(3) All applicants must submit an application for admission to the Office of the Registrar together with all high school and postsecondary transcripts.

(4) In addition to (3), all applicants must file additional documentation to the Exceptional Student Athletes Admission Committee in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation. This documentation will attest to their eligibility as an exceptional athlete (see (2) above). This documentation is then screened by the Committee to ensure the above eligibility criteria have been met. Applicants from non-CIS sports will not be considered.

(5) The application for admission and all relevant material must be submitted no later than August 1.

220.8 Transition Year Program

The University of Alberta encourages Aboriginal students to apply for entrance to its degree programs through the normal admission categories as detailed in §15. Prospective students who do not meet these requirements may be eligible for admission by successfully completing the Transition Year Program. See §14.1.3.