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**Academic misconduct.** Intellectual dishonesty includes such offences as plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of records. Refer to Student Code of Conduct and Right to Appeals Regulations.

**Academic Expert.** An academic expert (like a tutor) is an academic who guides students through a course and marks assignments and exams. This staff member is like a professor in a traditional university setting. Not all AU courses have an academic expert assigned. Some have tutors.

**Academic Probation.** A specified period of time during which a student will have limits on the number of courses for which they can register.

**Academic Suspension.** A period during which a student will not be allowed to register in credit courses, receive letters of permission or transfer credits, or apply to or graduate from a program of study at AU.

**Academic year.** The academic year at AU runs from September 1 to August 31.

**Active student.** A student who is able to register in courses and who is in Good Academic Standing.

**Admission.** As an open university, AU admits students 16 years of age or older. All students must first be admitted to the University before they can enrol in a program or register in courses. Students are admitted after completing a General Application Form and paying the applicable, one-time, non-refundable General Application Fee. See the Admissions section for more information.

## Glossary

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**Advisors.** Academic advisors can assist you in areas ranging from clarifying your undergraduate program requirements to helping choose the next course for your program of studies. They also provide information about university regulations and procedures, and assist with the interpretation of your transfer credit evaluation. Contact an [advisor](#).

**Appeal.** Requesting a review of a decision made by an official of AU. Students may appeal decisions on transfer credit, marks, tests, assignments, final grades, questions of process, disciplinary action, etc. All appeals must be made to the person responsible for overseeing the initial decision. Review the [Student Code of Conduct and Right to Appeal Regulations](#).

**Applied Studies (area of study).** There are two groups in the Applied Studies area of study: [Business and Administrative Studies](#) and [Applied Studies](#).

**Applied Studies** includes courses in [Architectural Design Studio \(ADST\)](#), [Applied Studies \(APST\)](#), [Architecture \(ARCH\)](#), [Communication Studies \(CMNS\)](#), [Criminal Justice \(CRJS\)](#), [Education \(EDUC\)](#), [Educational Psychology \(EDPY\)](#), [Health Studies \(HLST\)](#), [Indigenous Studies \(INST\)](#), and [Nursing \(NURS\)](#).

**Applied Studies (Business and Administrative)** includes courses in the disciplines of [Accounting \(ACCT\)](#), [Administration \(ADMN\)](#), [Communications \(COMM\)](#), [Computers and Management Information Systems \(CMIS\)](#), [e-Commerce \(ECOM\)](#), [Economics \(ECON\)](#), [Entrepreneurship \(ENTP\)](#), [Finance \(FNCE\)](#), [Governance \(GOVN\)](#), [Health Administration \(HADM\)](#), [Human Resources Management \(HRMT\)](#), [Industrial Relations \(IDRL\)](#), [Legal Studies \(LGST\)](#), [Management Science \(MGSC\)](#), [Marketing \(MKTG\)](#), [Organizational Behaviour \(ORGB\)](#), and [Taxation \(TAXX\)](#).

**Area of study.** AU's division of courses into groups of related subjects. The four areas are:

[Humanities](#)

[Social Science](#)

[Science](#)

[Applied Studies](#)

The requirement for Arts in some degree regulations refers to Humanities and Social Science area of study. The requirement for Sciences includes all science courses. The requirement for Applied Studies includes courses in administrative studies, nursing courses and a wide range of professionally-oriented courses. The area designation for each course is shown in each course syllabus. Search for a course by its Area of Study.

**Arts (area of study).** Courses in the Arts area of study can be found in the Humanities and Social Science areas of study.

**Assessment/Evaluation.** The assessment and evaluation of previous post-secondary education for possible transfer credit toward an AU program.

**Asynchronous Communication.** Communication that does not occur simultaneously. Email, for example, is asynchronous. See Communication.

**Athabasca University Exam Centre.** The University provides exam services at the Athabasca, Calgary, and Edmonton locations.

**Audio component.** Some courses are supplemented by audio components (CDs and/or online audio), some of which are required listening, others are optional. If supplemented, the course syllabus will note this in the delivery mode section. Overseas students are asked to contact the AU Library before registering in a course that has an audio component.

**Audit course.** A student may register in a course without intending to obtain credit. This course will appear on the student's transcript but will not have a grade associated with it. Audit students are not allowed to write midterms or finals, but the student can choose whether they would like to submit assignments for grading. They receive the same tutorial support as a Credit course.

**AU approved invigilator.** An individual or institution authorized by Examination Services Unit in the Office of the Registrar to supervise an AU course examination. For a list of approved invigilators, see the Exam Invigilation Network on the Office of the Registrar site.

**Awards/scholarships.** Whether you receive top grades; balance academic with family, career, and community roles; or have financial shortcomings, Athabasca University has a Student

Awards Program that can potentially benefit you. Refer to Student Awards on the Office of the Registrar [website](#).

## B

**Bachelor degree.** An undergraduate academic degree awarded to someone who successfully completed a undergraduate program of study that generally lasted three or four years. Also called baccalaureate.

**Block transfer.** Students who are granted admission to a post-diploma program, for example, may be granted a block of transfer credit based on a completed credential. In these cases, the student's transcript is reviewed and transfer credit is awarded as a block of credit rather than on a course-by-course basis. See [Block Transfer Credit](#).

**Business and Administrative (area of study).** A group of courses within the Applied Studies area: Accounting (ACCT), Administration (ADMN), Communications (COMM), Computers and Management Information Systems (CMIS), e-Commerce (ECOM), Economics (ECON), Entrepreneurship (ENTP), Finance (FNCE), Governance (GOVN), Health Administration (HADM), Human Resources Management (HRMT), Industrial Relations (IDRL), Legal Studies (LGST), Management Science (MGSC), Marketing (MKTG), Organizational Behavior (ORGB), and Taxation (TAXX).

## C

**Calendar.** This is the document containing the University's regulations. The online Calendar is the official Calendar. In the event of any discrepancies between the program websites and the online Calendar, the online Calendar will be binding.

US = catalogue

UK = prospectus

**Challenge for credit process.** A university process whereby students have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or skills that would normally be found in a university level course. Refer to [Challenge for Credit](#).

**Changing programs.** You may change from one undergraduate program to another by logging in to [myAU](#).

**Communication.** Communication between students and AU staff is done by a variety of methods. Asynchronous communication describes communication that does not occur simultaneously. Email, for example, is asynchronous. Synchronous communication is live. It describes communication that occurs simultaneously; for example, chatrooms, teleconference, and videoconference.

**Computer requirements.** AU's standard computing platform is a computer running Microsoft Windows with MS Office. The minimum requirements for students using a Mac or PC are access to a web browser, email, and the software capability to submit assignments as Word documents. See the [AU IT website](#) for current requirements. Some courses support other hardware and software platforms and may have more specific requirements noted in the online syllabus. AU courses that use eTextbooks may have specific technical requirements. See the [eText Initiative website](#) for updated information.

**Concentration.** A designated study focus within a three-year program, such as the Bachelor of Arts, Anthropology Concentration.

**Convocation.** The ceremony held every year where graduates participate in the conferral of degrees, usually in Athabasca, Alberta. Visit the [Convocation website](#) for specific dates.

**Corequisite.** A course that must be taken concurrently with another course.

**Counsellors.** Counsellors can help students clarify their educational and career goals, decide on a program of study, develop sound study and personal management skills, identify and overcome barriers to learning. Visit the [Counselling website](#).

**Courier Services – Examination Request.** Because postal and courier times vary, students must request their examination well in advance of the requested write date. If not enough time is allowed, AU cannot guarantee that the student's examination will arrive before the requested write date.

[Examination Request Timelines](#)

[Courier Recovery Fees](#)

**Courier Services – Transcripts.** Students can request their transcript be sent to themselves or another institution by courier. See the [current fees](#).

**Course Administration and Technology Fee.** This mandatory fee supports the delivery of Athabasca University-produced learning resources, student learning systems, library services, and learning design and development. The fee is charged for all course registrations: initial or re-registration.

**Course composite grade.** The final grade for a course expressed as an Alpha grade. The course composite grade reflects a student's understanding of the course materials. The course composite grade is often a weighted average of the student's marks for quizzes, assignments, tests, and examinations. See [Undergraduate Grading Policy](#).

**Course contract period.** The time that students are actively registered in a course. The course begins on the course contract start date and runs until the course contract end date.

**Course contract start date.** *The date students officially start a course. For individualized study students this is usually the first day of the month of the course contract period. For grouped and paced online study, this is the date of the first scheduled class.*

**Course contract end date.** *The last day for students to complete an individualized study course is always the last day of the month (or the day the student finishes the course, if earlier). The last day for students to complete a grouped study course is always the date of the last scheduled course meeting.*

**Course Coordinator.** The University faculty member (professor) responsible for the course.

**Course extension.** The purchase of additional time and access to AU resources in order to complete a course. See [relevant section](#) of Calendar.

**Course load.** The number of courses a student is actively registered in at one time. The maximum course load is six courses at a time. See the [relevant section](#) of the Calendar for more detail.

**Course Materials Fee.** This fee covers the cost of mandatory course resources such as publisher text and e-texts, or other third-party learning resources. Courses that do not include these resources do not charge the fee. See [Undergraduate Courses Without Course Packages](#).

**Course overload.** Course(s) that have been approved to be taken above the Maximum Undergraduate Course Load regardless of delivery mode (e.g. individualized study, grouped study). See the [relevant section](#) of the Calendar for more detail.

**Course syllabus.** It is the description of the course that students, institutions, and others can consult to determine course prerequisites, course content, learning outcomes, required activities, and evaluation strategies. It contains information needed in order for a student to be able to register for the course (course overview, outline, number of credits, prerequisites and precluded, delivery mode, area of study, faculty, availability and if it is available for challenge for credit) and includes information needed for students currently registered in the course (evaluation: assignments and exams, course materials needed, challenge for credit information (if applicable) and challenge evaluation). Check the online [course syllabi](#).

**Course work.** All required activities (assignments, clinical or practicum placements, quizzes, papers, examinations, etc.) that are submitted for marking towards the final grade.

**Courses with more than one area of study.** Courses listed under one discipline may be listed under two areas of study. For example, a course listed as PSYC under the Social Science area of study may have a notation that it can also be used to fulfill the Science area of study for AU credential students only. This situation is not considered cross-listing.

**Credential.** Degrees, diplomas, or certificates awarded on successful completion of a program.

**Credits.** The value assigned to a course. Normally, AU courses are either three-credits or six-credits which corresponds to conventional universities of one semester or two semesters respectively. Some courses in the Bachelor of Nursing degree carry a practicum component with a weight of four or nine credits. The course syllabus for each course will indicate how many credits it is.

**Credit course.** A course taken with the intention of obtaining credit. See also [Audit course](#).

**Cross-listed course.** Cross-listed courses appear under two (or more) disciplines and in effect may be listed under two (or more) areas of study. For example, [HIST/CLAS/HUMN 309](#). The online syllabus will indicate whether a course is cross-listed. You can only receive credit for one discipline.

## D

**Delivery mode.** The method by which a course is taught. Different delivery modes at AU are individualized study, grouped study, practicum, and paced online. The delivery mode for each course is noted in the course syllabus.

[Individualized study](#)

[Grouped study](#)

[Practicum](#)

[Paced online](#)

**DegreeWorks.** [DegreeWorks](#) is a web-based, academic advising and degree audit solution that retrieves the student's academic record from and organizes it into an educational plan on the web, easily identifying program requirements, which courses have been completed, and which courses students still need in order to complete their credential.

**Designated bilingual programs.** Programs through which students demonstrate proficiency in more than one language by completing at least 30 credits in each recognized language. Currently AU only has this available for French/English languages.

**Digital Reading Room.** The Digital Reading Room (DRR) is an electronic version of a library reserve system, or a virtual reading room. The material accessed is either required course readings or it supplements the course, and is of use for further study and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Refer to the library's [Digital Reference Centre](#). Tips on searching the journal databases and help with researching, writing, and citing (referencing) can be found in the [Library Help Centre](#).

**Directed study.** A 400-level course that does not have a prescribed curriculum. In consultation with the course professor, you will choose a specific topic and then undertake an in-depth

study. Professor approval is required for all directed study courses before registration can occur.

**Discipline.** The specific subject area for a course. For example: Psychology (PSYC), English (ENGL), and Women's and Gender Studies (WGST); are all disciplines at AU.

## E

**Early access to courses (individualized study).** Some courses offered in the Moodle learning management system allow early access by the student the day after their course registration is processed. Access is not allowed for quizzes, tutor or faculty support, and students are not allowed to submit assignments until the course contract start date.

**Electives.** A list of courses or disciplines that students choose from in order to fulfill degree requirements.

**e-letters.** The method by which AU primarily corresponds with students. e-Letters are available through the myAU portal and are stored for six months.

**English Language Proficiency.** The minimum level of English written and oral communication skills needed to undertake courses offered by Athabasca University.

**Enrol.** AU students may enrol in a credential (degree, diploma, or university certificate) program or as a non-program student. The program regulations in effect at the time of enrolment, or re-enrolment, are the regulations that govern that student's program.

**eTextbook (electronic textbook).** The digital version of a textbook, which may include other learning resources such as workbooks, problem sets, tutorials, videos, simulations, and interactive software.

**Evaluation.** A review of a student's post-secondary studies to determine if any credit can be transferred towards the AU program the student has enrolled in.

**Exam Invigilation Network.** A network of approved exam invigilation centres in Canada. The Exam Invigilation Network list is approved and maintained by the Office of the Registrar and made available to students.

**Exam write date.** The date a student has scheduled to write an Athabasca University exam with the exam centre or an invigilator.

**Examination rebooking fee.** A fee is levied when a student rebooks a scheduled examination at AU Edmonton, AU Calgary, or AU Athabasca.

**Exemption.** There are two kinds of exemptions at AU:

1. AU may award a block transfer of credit to holders of an approved diploma or degree. Within the previous diploma or degree, you may have course equivalents to AU courses required within your current program. These courses would be awarded an exemption. In order to fulfill the program requirements, you will be required to replace these courses with courses of the same (or higher) level in the same area of study or discipline.
2. In program regulations where students are required to have ENGL 255, students can be exempted\* from taking this course if they meet the following criteria:
  - have a grade of B- (70 per cent) or better in an AU English course above the preparatory (100) level; or
  - received credit for an English course in which a grade of B- or better was achieved.

*\* The exemption must be replaced with a 3-credit course in any discipline at the junior/senior (200 to 400) level.*

**Extension.** Lengthening the time allowed to complete an individualized study course by two months is called an extension. A maximum of three extensions are allowed and a fee is charged for each extension.

**Extra to degree.** Successfully completed course that is not included in a student's AU program requirements and is not included in the calculation of the program GPA.

F

**Faculty member.** The person responsible for the normal delivery of the course in question (professor, course coordinator).

**Final grade.** See Grade.

**Financial aid agencies.** Financial assistance is available to students from the students' local agencies. Students may be eligible for loans, grants, bursaries, or scholarships.

**Full course load.** A full course equates to 18 credits over 6 months for non-SFA students or 15 credits over 4 months for SFA funded students (100 per cent). All courses for full course load purposes must have the same start date.

**Full-time SFA student.** A student who is in receipt of a student loan and/or grant from one of the provincial or territorial government financial assistance agencies in Canada. Additionally, the student must be registered in a minimum of 60 per cent of a full course load, or 9 credits over four months for one semester, or 18 credits over eight months for two semesters.

**Full-time student (non-SFA).** Full-time students are enrolled in a minimum of 60 per cent of a full course load. At the undergraduate level, a full course load is defined as 3.75 credits per month at AU. The minimum requirement for full-time status is 2 credits per month.

*For more information on SFA and non-SFA students, visit the [AU Student Financial Aid](#) section of the [Office of the Registrar](#) site.*

## G

**General Application Form.** The form completed in order to become an AU student.

**Good Academic Standing.** The status of a student who has met or exceeded the minimum requirements specified in AU's Undergraduate Academic Standing Policy and who does not have active sanctions for misconduct per the Academic or Non-Academic Misconduct policies.

**Grade.** The final grade that is achieved in your completed course. Marks are applied to your assignments, essays, and examinations. See Undergraduate Grading Policy.

**Grade point.** A grade point is a number between 0 and 4.00 that is assigned to a grade (alpha or percentage) and then used to calculate a grade point average (GPA). The grade point value is reflected on the Official Student Record. See also Undergraduate Grading Policy.

**Grade point average.** The grade point average is a weighted average calculated as follows: Sum of (grade point x credit hours) / (sum of credit hours). Courses graded on a pass/fail basis and those courses accepted on transfer credit are not included in the GPA calculations. See [Undergraduate Grading Policy](#).

**Graduate studies.** Advanced studies beyond the undergraduate level leading to an award of post-baccalaureate certificate, diploma, master's, or doctoral degree. Generally requires an undergraduate degree for admission. AU provides innovative, Internet-based graduate programs that reach students around the world. View the [Graduate Program Calendar](#).

**Graduation.** Completion of all requirements of a program of study verified by the Office of the Registrar and approved by General Faculties Council.

**Graduation with Distinction or Great Distinction.** Graduation with Distinction is presented to students with a final program GPA of 3.60 to 3.84. Graduation with Great Distinction is presented to students with a final program GPA of 3.85 or higher. More [information](#).

**Grouped lab.** Supervised science labs that are taken at specific locations and times. Supervised labs involve a substantial amount of work. [Science lab information](#).

**Grouped study.** A delivery mode in which the course takes place in a physical classroom setting. Contact with the instructor is face to face.

[Other delivery modes](#)

[Collaborating Institutions](#)

**Grouped study exam.** An exam for a course in which all the students at each site write at the same time on the same day.

**Grouped study tutor.** An individual approved by the Academic Coordinator to teach an Athabasca University grouped study course and invigilate the exams for that course.

H

**Health Administration Practicum Course.** A Health Administration Practicum Course includes both project proposal and field placement components and is offered within a

designated four-month timeframe. Project proposal components are online, while field placement components are at varied locations and times.

**Helpdesk.** AU's Helpdesk attendants will help students solve most problems relating to their computing resources. Students may contact AU's Helpdesk by submitting the [online form](#), or by phone: 1.800.788.9041, extension 6405 (toll free from anywhere in Canada or the United States) or direct at 1.780.675.6405.

**Home labs.** Home labs are compulsory components of some of AU's science courses. Home labs are learning activities, such as demonstrations, observations, simulations, and experiments, which students do in or near their own homes rather than in a university laboratory.

These labs usually require a lab kit that students order online from the relevant course syllabus. Some home lab activities require some materials that most students have in their homes or materials can be purchased locally without great cost. The kits may contain materials that are hazardous in some way (especially for young children and pets) and as such, they must be handled and stored appropriately.

Students who are in correctional institutions may have some difficulty taking certain courses with home labs (e.g., some kits contain sharp objects that may not be allowed). Also, be aware that certain home lab kits cannot cross international borders (e.g., some contain seeds that may not be allowed in, others contain electronic equipment that required duty payments). Therefore, before registering, it is recommended that students contact the lab coordinator regarding the availability of home lab kits in each particular situation. Check the [course syllabus](#) for details.

**Humanities (area of study).** An area of university studies that includes courses in Art History, Classics, Communication Studies, English, French, Global Studies, Heritage Resources Management, History, Humanities, Indigenous Studies, Information Systems, Legal Studies, Music, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Spanish, and Women's and Gender Studies.

I

**ID Number.** See [student ID number](#).

**Inactive student.** A student who has let their [active status](#) lapse.

**Independent labs.** AU has developed a framework that allows students to access the laboratory component of certain science courses without taking the remaining instructional component, provided they meet strict prerequisite requirements and have professor approval before registering in the course. Each lab is worth one credit. Should a student decide to take the remaining instructional portion of the course, the additional credit earned for laboratory modules is recognized.

Independent labs are supervised by AU lab instructors and professors and are only offered at specific locations at specific times. Most labs run between two to eight days. Students have up to two months to complete a lab from the date of registration. No extensions are allowed in independent labs unless specifically authorized by the course professor. Independent labs are not available for challenge. If a student is enrolled at another institution, the student should receive approval in writing by their home institution to ensure that it will grant credit for the lab. If the student is using this course to update laboratory skills (e.g., you are a teacher or instructor), the student must provide evidence of having previously taken an equivalent science course or have the equivalent theoretical requirements. When the student attends the lab, they are responsible for making their own arrangements and payments for transportation, accommodation, and food.

#### Science lab information.

**Individualized study.** AU's main method of course instruction. Students set their own schedule within the time allowed to take the course (course contract period). Contact with the tutor, academic expert or course coordinator is done online or by email and students may interact with classmates in online forums within the course. For information on course start dates and registration deadlines, refer to the registration section. Also, see other delivery modes.

**Intellectual honesty.** The acknowledgment of scholarly contributions of others by citing references, attributing quotations, etc. Failure to do so is academic misconduct.

**International undergraduate student.** This is a student who is pursuing their AU undergraduate studies from outside of Canada and the United States, with the exception of Canadians in Canadian embassies or consulates, employees of Canadian

governments (federal or provincial) working outside Canada, and Canadian Armed Forces located abroad. All information about international undergraduate students taking courses can be found in the [Registration](#) section.

**Invigilator (or proctor).** This is someone who is approved to supervise students at an examination. See also [AU approved invigilator](#).

## J

**Junior courses.** These courses are usually introductory (200 level) and are equivalent to first-year courses at most universities.

## KL

**Lab component only.** See [independent labs](#).

**Laboratory science courses.** Courses that contain a substantial amount of work including exercises, techniques, and sample-handling relevant to the course discipline. The lab portion of these courses is usually site-specific and supervised. For current lab information, contact the [Centre for Science](#).

**Late Examination Request.** A request for an exam that has been received after the exam request deadline but before the student's contract end date. In such cases the late examination request fee is applied. See the [late exam request](#) section of the Calendar.

**Letter of Certification.** An official confirmation of information extracted from a student's record that is not available on a transcript. [More information](#).

**Letter of Permission.** A document permitting an AU credential student to take one or more courses at another post-secondary institution for credit toward the student's AU program. [More information](#).

**Levels.** Describes preparatory (100), junior (200), or senior (300 or 400) level courses.

**Lost exam.** A written exam is considered lost when the exam, or part of the exam, through no fault of the student, has not been received by the University within the timelines as noted in the [Lost Exam Procedures](#).

**Lost Examination Reimbursement.** When a written exam is believed lost by AU, and the student is re-tested, the student may be issued a refund to compensate for additional costs they may incur. The reimbursement amount of the refund will not exceed the Lost Exam Reimbursement amount. See the Lost Exam Policy for more information.

## MN

**Major.** A designated focus of study within a four-year program discipline such as the Bachelor of Arts, Anthropology Major; or the Bachelor of Science, Human Science Major.

**Marks.** Marks are applied to assignments, essays, and examinations. See also Grade.

**Maximum course load.** The maximum number of courses a student may be actively registered in at one time. For more information, see Registration section.

**Moodle.** AU's learning management software; a tool for learning online. Moodle allows students to interact with their tutor and other students, participate in forums for online discussions between instructors and students, and access the library, digital reading rooms, and other research resources.

**Multiple Examination Request.** This is an exam request for a previously unwritten examination, which has been returned to the University by the AU approved invigilator. See also to Unwritten/Multiple Examinations.

**myAU.** myAU is AU's student web portal which allows students access to their courses, their student records, and their e-letters. Students may also take care of administrative matters, such as booking examinations, submitting assignments, and applying for extensions.

**No area of study** indicates that a course cannot be used to fulfill an area of study requirement in a program. The course may, however, fulfill part of the overall degree requirements if it is appropriate to the program.

**Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.** Non-academic offences attempted or committed by students on University premises or during University-sponsored activities shall be grounds for

disciplinary action by the University under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

**Non-Business and Administrative (area of study).** These courses are any courses outside of the Business and Administrative area of study listing.

**Non-program student.** A student who has applied to the University, but is not enrolled in a degree, diploma, or certificate program. Non-program students can register in courses. See also Program student.

**Not-to-take.** Awarded when equivalent knowledge of a particular course has been identified within a student's transfer credit assessment. Courses awarded a not-to-take do not carry credit and will serve as a prerequisite if required.

**Nursing practicum course.** Nursing practicum courses include both theory and clinical components and are offered within a designated four-month time frame. Theory components are online, while clinical components are at varied locations and times.

## O

**Official Student Record.** A file containing documents and data, regardless of their physical medium (paper, electronic), their format, type or characteristics, created to gather, to store, and to preserve information regarding a student's entire history of learning at a post-secondary institution. The file contains courses, grades, credits, and degrees pertaining to the file's subject.

**Online Labs:** Online labs (virtual labs) are compulsory components of some of AU's science courses. They are series of interactive, inquiry-based science simulations and exercises. These labs are delivered via the Internet and are required to be completed by students on their own computers. Registered students will be allowed the access to these labs through the course webpage (Moodle course site), or through external links (individually provided for each specific course). Some online lab activities are interactive simulations of experiments that are typically conducted in a laboratory setting and other online lab activities are realistic simulations of systems in nature (virtual labs).

**Open admission:** Admission to the University and registration in courses (except where a prerequisite is needed) is not based on prior academic achievement. The only admission requirement is that a student must be 16 years of age or older unless specifically exempt from the age requirement. See [Admissions](#) for more information.

**Open Educational Resources (OERs):** Any type of educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license. The nature of these open materials means that anyone can legally and freely copy, use, adapt and re-share them. OERs range from textbooks to curricula, syllabi, lecture notes, assignments, tests, projects, audio, video, and animation.

**Options.** One or more courses chosen from any discipline to complete degree requirements. Students should be cognizant of the level and area of study requirements if either have not already been met.

## P

**Paced online.** A course that is offered online, but students follow along a schedule of assignments, discussion, and examination as set out by the instructor. See other [delivery modes](#).

**Parchment.** Document issued by AU that communicates the nature of the credential and date of its conferral. This document is signed and sealed by AU officials.

**Part-time student (non-SFA).** Those who are registered in less than 60 per cent of a full course load with AU. Part-time status means less than two credits per month. See also [Full-time student](#).

**Part-time student financial assistance funded (SFA) student.** AU's term for a student who is in receipt of a part-time student loan and/or a part-time grant from one of the Provincial or Territorial Government's Financial Assistance Agencies in Canada. Part-time status then means less than 60 per cent of a full course load, or less than nine credits over a four-month term or less than 12 credits over a six month term.

**Pilot course.** A course that is being offered to test, measure and assess new educational technologies, methodologies, resources, and/or course delivery methods. A pilot course is a trial that is

offered for a limited period of time and has a finite number of students registered.

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is the use of another individual's words, ideas, images, or results without giving that individual appropriate credit.

**PLAR.** See [Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition](#) below.

**Post diploma.** Students who have received a diploma from a recognized college, may be able to transfer credit to a post-diploma program at AU. Recognized diplomas may also be considered for some programs on a course-by-course basis. For a list of approved diplomas, review the [Transfer Credit Database](#).

**Practicum.** A course that includes both theory and field placement components offered within a designated time frame. Theory components are online, while field placement components are at varied locations and times. See other [delivery modes](#).

**Pre-enrolment.** For those programs that have an admission requirement, students are placed in a pre-enrolment admission category until they have provided documentation providing the requirements. Refer to the specific [program regulations](#).

**Precluded course.** An AU course whose curriculum overlaps another course to the extent that students would be duplicating course work if they complete both courses. Precluded courses are usually the result of course revision, course renumbering, or cross-listing.

Students cannot receive credit for both courses.

**Preparatory level courses.** Courses numbered at the 100 level that prepare students for university level studies.

**Pre-registered courses.** Courses in which the student has registered for up to five months in advance.

**Pre-registration.** Registering in a course up to five months in advance. Preregistration is considered a registration and guarantees a particular start date.

**Prerequisite.** A requirement that must be met before a student takes a course. The requirement is usually another course that would prove the student has the required background to successfully complete the course in question. Prerequisites, if any, are listed in the course syllabus.

**Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR).** PLAR provides opportunities for students to gain credit for non-formal, informal and experiential learning. A mentored process will assist you in preparing a portfolio for assessment. Refer to the [Centre for Learning Accreditation](#).

**Professor approval.** Approval given by the course coordinator to the student to register in the course.

**Program GPA.** The grade point average calculated from the grades of the courses completed towards a specific program. The program GPA is used for program graduation requirements, awards, honours list, and [Graduation with Distinction and Great Distinction](#).

**Program student.** A student who is enrolled in a degree, diploma, or certificate program at the University. See also [Non-program student](#).

**Programs, time to complete.** The maximum amount of time to complete a program as indicated in the [program regulations](#).

Q, R

**Reading course.** A course offered at the senior level that involves a specialized field of study and professor approval.

**Registration.** The process of selecting and registering in courses at AU.

**Re-registration.** A subsequent registration in the same course, regardless of delivery mode.

**Residency.** The minimum number of AU credits that must be completed to fulfill a program's requirements. For more information, see [Residency Requirement](#) section of the Calendar.

**Required courses.** A list of courses in a program's regulations that a student must take in order to complete the degree requirements.

## S

**Science (area of study).** This area of study normally comprises courses based on a knowledge of facts, phenomena, laws, and proximate cause. It includes courses in Astronomy and Astrophysics, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Environmental Science, Geography, Geology, Health Studies, Mathematics, Nutrition, Physics, Psychology, and Science.

**Science labs.** Some science labs can be conducted from your own home. Others are supervised and taken in a group at a specific time and location. [Science lab information.](#)

**Second undergraduate degree.** Students who hold a recognized undergraduate degree and who wish to obtain an AU undergraduate degree in a different subject area, will be admitted to the second undergraduate degree regulations. See [Second Undergraduate Degree Policy](#) for more information.

**Senior courses.** Designated by a course number in the 300s or 400s, these courses assume a background of university learning.

**Significant Exam Disruption.** A significant exam disruption occurs if a student is unable to complete an exam due to an unforeseen, uncontrollable event such as fire, an evacuation, or technological failure.

**Social Science (area of study).** An area of university study that includes courses in Anthropology, Communication Studies, Criminal Justice, Cultural Studies, Economics, Education, Environmental Studies, Geography, Global Studies, Governance, Health Administration, Human Resources Management, Human Services, Industrial Relations, Indigenous Studies, Labour Studies, Legal Studies, Political Economy, Political Science, Psychology, Social Science, Sociology, Sociology/Anthropology, and Women's and Gender Studies.

**Stale dated courses:** A course or program will not be accepted for credit if older than the stale date noted for the program.

**Student.** A person enrolled at Athabasca University.

**Student awards/scholarships.** Refer to [website](#).

**Student Code of Conduct and Right to Appeal Regulations.**

Student offences and penalties are identified within the [Student Code of Conduct and Right to Appeal Regulations](#).

**Student, full-time.** See [Full-time student](#).

**Student ID number.** The seven-digit number assigned to each student. Always use your [student ID number](#) when you contact AU.

**Student, part-time.** See [Part-time student](#).

**Supervised labs.** Compulsory learning activities in some of AU's science courses that take place in person at specified times and locations. These lab sessions concentrate a great deal of work in a short period of time—usually from two to eight days. The sessions are conducted in teaching laboratories in buildings owned or leased by AU. [Science lab information](#).

**Supplemental examination.** A secondary midterm or final examination written by a student in an attempt to improve the final course grade.

**Syllabus.** See [Course syllabus](#).

**Synchronous communication.** Synchronous communication is live. It describes communication that occurs simultaneously; for example, chatrooms, teleconference, and videoconference. See [Communication](#).

## T

**Transcript.** An official document issued by AU that conveys information related to the [Official Student Record](#).

**Transfer credit.** Credit granted for the successful completion of post-secondary level courses or programs completed at another recognized organization or institution.

**Tutor.** A tutor is an academic staff member who guides students through a course and marks assignments and exams. This staff member is like a professor at a traditional university setting. Not all AU courses have a tutor assigned. Some have [academic experts](#).

## U,V,W,X,Y,Z

**Unclassified (non-program/visiting) students.** Students who are not enrolled in an AU degree, diploma, or certificate program. See [Admission Classifications](#).

**Undergraduate studies.** Post-secondary studies leading to an award of a bachelor degree, diploma, or certificate.

**Unwritten Examination.** An exam which a student has requested, but did not write. Refer to [Unwritten/Multiple Examinations](#).

**Video/DVD component.** In many AU courses, AU students have the option of viewing videos online, or on DVD and/or videotapes provided in the course package. To ensure viewing components are compatible, overseas students are asked to contact the AU library before registering in a course that has a videotape/DVD component.

**Virtual Helpdesk.** The [Virtual Helpdesk](#) (VHD) provides computer science students technical assistance with their courses. The VHD is staffed by senior students and should not be confused with [AU's Computing Services Helpdesk](#).

**Visiting students.** Students taking courses at AU for transfer credit to another post-secondary institutions. [Unclassified \(Non-Program/Visiting\) Students](#).

**Wait-listed courses.** A course is wait listed if course materials are not currently available for that course. Students are given the option of placing themselves on a waitlist until course materials become available.

**Withdrawal.** The process of withdrawing from an AU course. [Withdrawal timeframes](#) are important to monitor since the timing of a withdrawal may have bearing on what is recorded on the academic transcript.

**Zero-credit course.** Students in zero-credit courses receive the same academic support, have access to all services provided to AU students, but the courses won't fulfill any requirement towards a credential. Zero-credit courses are assessed the same fee structure as three-credit courses minus the Students' Union Fees and Alumni Fees. Other academic-related fees and regulations also apply to zero-credit courses.

**Information effective Sept. 1, 2020 to Aug. 31, 2021.**

*Updated December 08 2020 by laurab*

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