



# First-Year Planning Guide for the Bachelor of Arts



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Arts Academic Advising

[arts.ubc.ca](https://arts.ubc.ca)

# Introduction

To support your transition UBC, Arts Academic Advising has designed this guide to help you course plan and prepare for first-year registration.

## This guide will help you:

- Choose a first-year study option that best suits your academic interests and learning preferences.
- Identify your academic interests to select courses.
- Understand the degree requirements of a Bachelor of Arts degree.
- Create Worklists to prepare registration.
- Learn about UBC resources to support your academics and wellbeing.

*If you are a BFA, BIE, BMS, or BMus student, please follow the structure of your degree program and connect with your program-specific Academic Advisor for any questions.*

## Instructions:

1. Download and save this fillable PDF with a new file name before you start working through it.
2. Each week, you will receive an Arts newsletter that will focus on a specific part of this guide along with an invitation to join a related [advising workshop](#) where you can ask academic advisors and [peer advisors](#) questions.

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## Part 1: Exploring Your Interests

Your Arts education will prepare you to draw connections, cultivate critical thinking, be creative, and be part of collective solutions to complex societal problems. UBC Arts offers an unparalleled student experience that will enable you to shape your own degree and chart your own course.

Your first year at UBC is about transitioning to university life, exploring your academic interests, and selecting courses that will spark your curiosity. As you move further into your degree, you will think about your major more seriously and focus more of your courses on program requirements. So, enjoy your first year while you explore your interests and new academic disciplines so you can feel confident when the time comes to choose or apply for a major in second or third year.

### Step one: Explore your personal and academic interests

Reflect on your personal interests and curiosities. Write down ideas that come to mind. Ask yourself questions like:

- What was your favorite subject in high school (or previous studies) and why?
- What do you want to learn more about?
- What skills would you like to develop?
- If you could do any work in the world, what would it be?
- Who are your role models and why? What did they study in school?
- Have you done any volunteering? Where and why?
- How do you usually spend your free time?

**Note your ideas here:**

## Step two: Explore Arts programs

Browse the [Faculty of Arts program options list](#) or the [Academic Calendar](#) to find programs (Honours, majors, minors) available to BA that pique your interest. Arts programs can be classified into three disciplines, the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Creative and Performing Arts.

Creative and Performing Arts	Acting, Art History, Creative Writing, Film Studies, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, etc.
Humanities	African Studies, Asian Studies, Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies (Arabic, Classical Studies, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, etc.), Canadian Studies, Chinese, English, French, German, Hispanic Studies (Spanish), History, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Philosophy, Romance Studies, Russian, etc.
Social Sciences	Anthropology, Anthropological Archaeology, Cognitive Systems, Economics, Family Studies, First Nations and Endangered Languages, First Nations and Indigenous Studies, Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, Geography, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, Urban Studies, etc.

**Note the programs here:  
(include links to refer to them later)**

## Step three: Explore courses on the UBC course schedule

- Login to the Student Service Centre (SSC) and click the “course schedule” button.
- Select “UBC Vancouver” and the correct Session (e.g., 2021 Winter).
- Browse for introductory (100-level) courses by clicking into specific subject codes. For example, if you are interested in Anthropology, click on “ANTH”, find the 100-level course(s), and click on the course (ANTH 100) to read the course description.

**Note the courses here:  
(include links to the courses to find them later when you are preparing for  
registration):**

## Part 2: Choosing Your First-Year Study Option

As a Bachelor of Arts student, you do not declare or apply for a major in your first year. Instead, you choose one of three first-year study options to develop your academic interests and prepare you for when you add a major or minor to your degree before your third year.

The Faculty of Arts offers [three first-year study options](#):

- [Arts One](#)
- [Coordinated Arts Program \(CAP\)](#)
- [Custom Timetable](#)

After your first year, you will build custom timetables until you graduate. If you are having trouble choosing a study option, take this short quiz to understand your learning preferences:

**Check the options that you prefer:**

### List A

- Learning in smaller classes
- Taking classes with the same people
- Having individualized support with my courses
- Having a cohesive academic theme to my first-year courses

### List B

- Having flexibility to choose all the courses I want
- Meeting new people in all of my classes
- Being able to design my own daily schedule
- Having flexibility to change classes in Term 2

### Recommendations:

- - - - > If you have selected more factors from **List A**, we recommend two of the first-year study options: [Arts One or the Coordinated Arts Program \(CAP\)](#).

- - - - > If you have selected more factors from **List B**, we recommend building a **custom timetable** for your first year.

**Insight:** *Arts One and CAP are full-year programs. You will not be able to change your registration in the programs after the ad/drop deadline.*

## Part 3: Understanding Credits and Degree Requirements

### First-Year Credits

A Bachelor of Arts degree is comprised of a minimum of 120 credits. If your goal is to graduate in four years, you should complete 30 credits per year.

A one-term course is typically three credits. Courses that span two-terms over the Winter Session are typically 6 credits. Most students take five courses each term, resulting in 15 credits per term and 30 credits over the Winter Session.

How many credits should you register in? The right credit load for each person will differ depending on life situation and individual learning preferences.

**Insight:** UBC's Winter Session is divided into two terms: Term 1, from early September to late December; and Term 2, from early January to the end of April. Term 1 of Summer Session begins in early May and continues through June. Term 2 of Summer Session begins in early July and ends in late August.

**Insight:** Be mindful of other things you want to achieve during your first year. For example, if you are thinking of joining a club, getting a job or volunteering, reflect on the time commitment that these things will require and plan courses accordingly. 4 courses per term might be a good balance for some, while 5 courses might be manageable for others. Don't forget that you can also take courses in the Summer Session to catch up!

### Credit considerations:

- You need to complete at least 27 credits before Summer Session in order to advance to second year standing for the next Winter Session. If you do not reach 27 credits, you can continue with your studies, but you will still be considered a first-year student. Year-level standing impacts your eligibility for programs and courses, and is one of the factors considered when registration dates are set. [Read more about Promotion Requirements.](#)
- To be considered a full-time Arts student, you need to be registered in at least 9 credits per term.
- If you are required to maintain a minimum course load due to funding, study permit, housing, athletics, or awards and scholarships, make sure you are aware of how many credits you must be registered in.  
You can take up to 32 credits (equivalent to 10 courses) in your first Winter Session to be able to register in a four credit Science course.



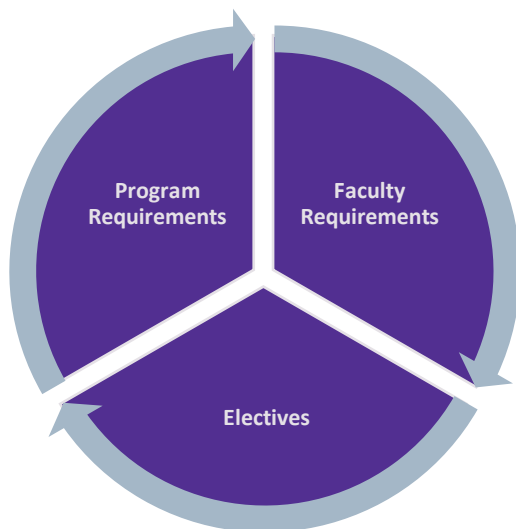
### High School Transfer Credit

If you are entering Arts with university-level Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or British-Patterned A-Level courses, you might be wondering how the courses apply as transfer credit to your degree. [Read this blog](#) to help you make confident decisions about transfer credit and course planning.

## Degree Requirements

Your Bachelor of Arts degree has [degree requirements](#), including:

- **Faculty-wide requirements**
- **Program-specific (Honours, major, minor) requirements**
- **Electives**



### Faculty-Wide Requirements

There are two Faculty-wide requirements that you should plan for in first year:

- ① **Writing Requirement:** Being able to read, write, and research at the university level is fundamental to your future academic success. Take three credits of WRDS 150A, ENGL 100, or register in Arts One or CAP in your first year.
- ② **Language Requirement:** The study of languages provides insight into cultures and having knowledge of a second language is a valuable life skill. You are encouraged to fulfill this requirement within your first 2 years. [Review your options to satisfy this requirement.](#)

### How the language requirement works

If you're wondering why you have to fulfill the UBC Arts Language Requirement, [read this blog](#) to understand how the requirement works and why language learning is so valuable to your Arts degree and beyond.

**There are three Faculty-wide requirements that must be completed before graduation:**

③ **Literature, Science, Research Requirement**: The research requirement is typically connected to your honours or major program, so it cannot be completed in first year. You may be interested in 100-level course options that fulfill the literature or science requirements, but it is not mandatory to complete these in first year.

### Program-Specific Requirements

If you know what program(s) (Major, Minor, Honours) you are interested in, go to the [Program Options](#) page to find links to department/program websites and the [Academic Calendar](#) to see a program's course requirements. First-year students are encouraged to start from the 100-level requirements as many upper-level (300 – 400) courses have 100-level courses as pre-requisites.

### Electives

Electives are courses that do not fulfill program (Honours, majors, minors) or Faculty-wide requirements. Electives are an important part of your Bachelor of Arts because they count towards credit requirements and let you explore subjects outside of your program.

***Insight:*** Sometimes an elective in your first year may lead you to discover a new program option (Honours, major, minor) that you've never considered before! If you decide to pursue the new program, the elective could become a program requirement.

## Part 4: Visualizing Your First-Year Plan

### Visualize your courses

Before you build a worklist and start registering for courses, it's a good idea to write down some ideas for your course plan. You can register up to 32 credits (equivalent to 10 courses) in the Winter Session. Arts One and CAP are full-year, 18-credit commitments, so you can add up to 2 more courses each term (12 credits). If you choose a 6 credit (Term 1 – Term 2) course, it will span across both terms.

**Choose from one of the following tables and fill in the empty rows with the courses you want to add in your first year:**

**Insight:** Return to part one, step three, of this guide, to review the list of courses you wrote down to fill out your table.

**Table 1 – If you plan to take Arts One:**

Term 1	Term 2
Arts One (ARTS 001A)	Arts One (ARTS 001A)
Arts One (ARTS 001A)	Arts One (ARTS 001A)
Arts One (ARTS 001A)	Arts One (ARTS 001A)

**Table 2 – If you plan to take the Coordinated Arts Program:**

Term 1	Term 2
CAP (STT)	CAP (STT)
CAP (STT)	CAP (STT)
CAP (STT)	CAP (STT)

**Table 3 – If you plan to build a Custom Timetable:**

(Include either WRSDDS 150A or ENGL 100 in your first year, in either Term 1 or Term 2)

Term 1	Term 2

## Get Ready for Registration

Follow these steps to prepare for registration.

### Step 1: Use the Worklist tool

Now that you've visualized the courses you're thinking about taking in first year, use UBC's Worklist tool to map out potential timetables (your weekly course schedule). [Watch a Worklist tutorial](#).

**Insight:** Give yourself enough time to get to class when planning back-to-back classes, especially if they're in different buildings. Use [UBC Wayfinding](#) to see the distance you'll need to travel between buildings.

[Log in to the UBC Course Schedule](#) to start building your worklist. [View sample Worklist timetables](#) to understand how to build yours. When you save a course to a worklist it does not register you in the course, it simply helps you design your schedule and find out if you meet the requirements (pre-requisites) to register for a particular course.

**Insight:** We recommend you make a few worklists, as occasionally the course sections that you hope to take will be full on your registration day. Make sure you have at least one complete worklist that you feel good about. You'll save time if you map out alternative course sections using worklists.

### Understanding terminology in the UBC Course Schedule

	Subject Code	Course Number	Section
<b>Example of how a course is listed in the course schedule</b>	PHIL	101	001
<b>What this means</b>	The subject area is philosophy	This is a 100-level course	Some courses may have multiple "sections" listed that correspond to the days, times, and term the course is offered. You can choose a specific section of course to create a timetable to meet your learning and schedule preferences.

**Insight:** Courses can have different [formats](#). Large-scale lectures offer a dynamic experience and can be supported with tutorials or labs. Smaller, more intimate courses can help you build relationships with professors and peers early on in your academic career. Regardless of the format, you can always connect with your instructors by asking questions during class and attending instructor office hours.

## Step 2: Prepare to register

You'll receive an email about one week before your registration opens to let you know that your registration date is posted on the [Student Services Centre \(SSC\)](#). For 2021, your open date will fall on July 6, 7, or 8. You'll be able to register any time between your registration open date and the [course change \(add/drop\) deadline](#) in September.

If you're planning on registering for Arts One, review the step-by-step [registration guide](#). For CAP, [view this guide](#).

### How to register

- Register for Winter Session Term 1 and 2 at the same time.
- Log in to the SSC and select the Vancouver Campus and Winter Session 2021.
- Select your ideal worklist, check the sections you want and click **register selected**. To register in all the courses in your worklist, click **register all**. Or, to register for single courses at a time without using a worklist, go to any course section and click **register section**

***Insight:** If you find a course is not right for you after you start it, you will have the option to drop it within two weeks of the course commencing in September. [Read this blog](#) to understand why the add/drop period exists and how to utilize it to make a schedule that works for you.*

### Still have questions? Attend a Registration Tutorial

If you have any further questions about registration, sign up for an Arts Advising Registration Tutorial where you will be shown how to build your Worklist. Bring a list of courses you're interested in to the tutorial. Watch your inbox for a newsletter with details about when the Registration Tutorials will happen.

## Part 5: Discovering UBC Resources

Here are some resources that can help you get you thrive at UBC:

### Academic & Learning Resources

- Read [tips](#) from a 5<sup>th</sup> year student on learning at university versus high school.
- View a [glossary of terminology](#): The Arts One Program has a summary of terminologies to help you understand university terminology.
- Boost your ability to do well in school. [Know your resources](#) and how to take advantage of them.
- Navigate your academic journey with peer-to-peer support from Arts Peer Advisors or Arts Peer Academic Coaches.

### Funding & Financial Resources

- Gain a better understanding of your costs and funding options by meeting with your [Enrolment Services Advisor](#).
- Explore the [financial support options](#) available to you by considering a student loan, applying for a scholarship or bursary, or browsing through job opportunities.

### Arts Indigenous Student Advising

[Arts Indigenous Student Advising](#) (AISA) in the Faculty of Arts supports the success of new and continuing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

### Health & Wellbeing

Thrive at UBC by taking care of your mental and physical health and wellbeing. [Discover the many confidential and personalized support options available to you.](#)

### International Student Support

Access [International Student Guide](#) to get support on immigration, health insurance, and dedicated International Student Advising.

### Involvement & Community

- Enrich your undergraduate experience through [experiential learning opportunities](#).
- [Attend Jumpstart](#): A five-day program designed to give you a first look at university life, let you meet your professors and academic community, and help you make your first friends at UBC Vancouver!
- [Consider Collegia](#): Meet other students, ask questions to your peers and upper-year students, access resources, and enjoy social events together.
- Join, start, or run a club. The [UBC AMS has over 350 clubs](#).
- Join a recreational league, get involved in a seasonal event, or cheer on UBC athletes at a game. [Read more about UBC sports and recreation](#).
- [Immerse yourself](#) in live music, theatre, opera, film, contemporary and fine art, a world-renowned Museum of Anthropology, and more.
- [Find out what's cooking at UBC](#).
- Join UBC Arts on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#)