

Welcome to Physiology!

First Year Orientation 2026

**Please check in with us &
take a seat in the first 3-4 rows :)
Feel free to grab some snacks!**

AGENDA

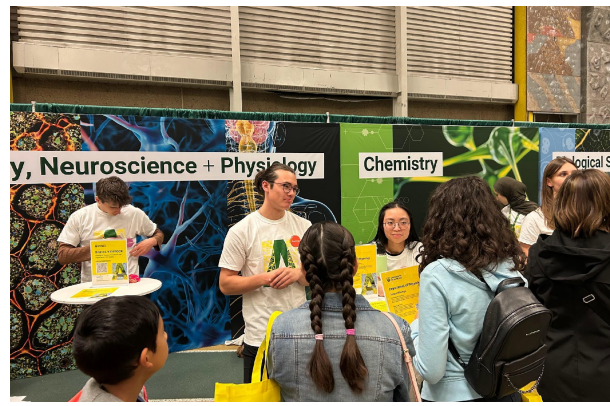
- ★ Who is the UPSA?
- ★ Hello from Dr. Clugston
- ★ Program Details
- ★ A Survival Guide by Dr. Hamza
- ★ First Year Tips
- ★ Important Dates
- ★ Question Period
- ★ Ice Breaker + Get to Know Each Other!

Who are we?

- The **Undergraduate Physiology Students' Association** is a student-led group whose mission is to support our peers in the Physiology Program. You are all automatically members of our club.
- We offer academic resources and support through info sessions:
 - Ex. How to get involved in research, what courses you can take, learning about other opportunities during your degree...
- We also do fun stuff! Social events, merch sales, fundraisers, holiday parties, BBQ, and **interdisciplinary mixers!**



Who are we?



MEET THE TEAM



UPSA

Undergraduate Physiology
Students' Association



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

Co-Presidents

Ivanna Sumka & Keisha Allones

- 4th year students; Ussher Lab & Kolic Lab
- **Favourite PHYSL areas:** Cardiovascular physiology, Endocrine/Reproductive physiology
- **Role:** Run the show! Ensure smooth operation of events/activities, manage UPSA email, represent students at department meetings/address concerns
- **Our Tips:** Attend office hours if you have questions! The profs appreciate your effort, and are super helpful :) Remember to take care of yourself (sweet treats can go a long way)!



VP Academics

Joy Cao & Michaela Drops

- 4th year students; Hull-Meichle Lab & Baker Lab
- **Favourite PHYSL areas:** Metabolic Physiology, Reproductive Physiology
- **Role:** Plan and host academic events such as Your Future in PHYSL, Research Available to You (RAY) Seminar, and Lab Tours.
- **Our Tips:** Balance is key in university! UofA has so much to offer for both academics and extracurriculars, so make sure that you continue to explore what you are passionate about, even if it is not necessarily related to your degree.



VP Social

Faith DiNicola

- 3rd year student;
- **Favourite PHYSL area:** Gastrointestinal/Reproductive physiology
- **Role:** Plans social events such as our Holiday Mixer, Meet and Greet BBQ, and off campus activities like bar nights and escape rooms.
- **My Tip:** Get involved in as much as possible! Opportunities will open up to you!



VP Finance

Celine Hatoum

- 4th year student
- **Favourite PHYSL area:** Cardiovascular Physiology
- **Role:** Manages our budget, applies for grants/funding, handles our bank account and reimbursements.
- **My Tip:** Put yourself out there! Getting to know a few people in your classes makes the journey feel less overwhelming and more enjoyable. We're all in the same boat!



VP Internal

Tia San Agustin

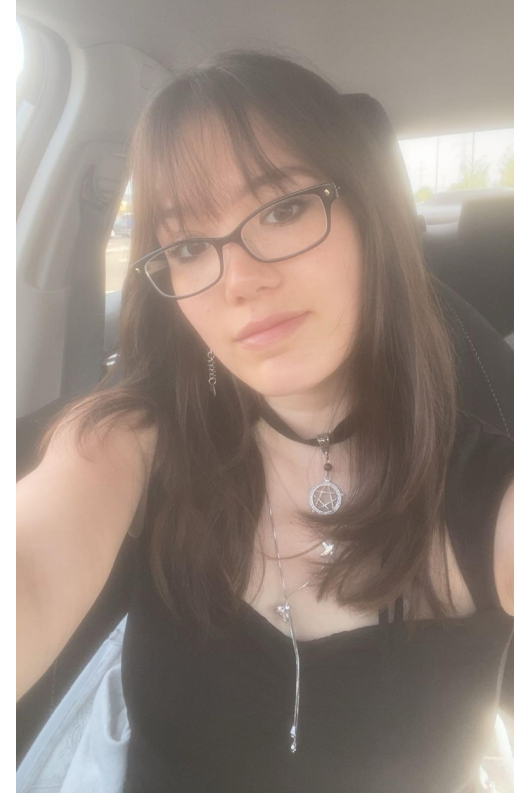
- 2nd year student
- **Favourite PHYSL area:** Reproductive physiology
- **Role:** Designs physiology themed merchandise such as hoodies, lanyards, water bottles, etc.
- **My Tip:** Don't spend all your time studying! A healthy school-life balance will make your university experience much more enjoyable.



VP External

Ashley Trudeau

- 5th year student; Dyck lab
- **Favourite PHYSL area:** Neuro and cardiovascular physiology
- **Role:** Promotes the program to high school students and at Open House, plans and coordinates 4th year graduation.
- **My Tip:** Put every assignment and exam from your syllabus into a calendar at the start of the term so that you can plan everything out and will never forget a due date!



VP Fundraising

Carter Holloway

- 4th year student; Kolic Lab
- **Favourite PHYSL area:** Cardiovascular Physiology
- **Role:** Plans and coordinates fundraisers including food, special items, and social events.
- **My Tip:** If you're interested in research, apply as early as possible as it can take a while to find an open lab. Don't let rejection discourage you, everyone in a lab has been told no many times.



VP Communications

Madi Edgar

- 3rd year student
- **Favourite PHYSL area:** Reproductive/Cardiovascular Physiology
- **Role:** Manages our social media accounts and website, posts promotions for our events, sends out monthly recap newsletters to students.
- **My Tip:** Figure out what study strategy works best for you, it will save you so much time. Don't forget to have fun and do the things you love, school isn't everything!



Year Representatives (You!!)

- We recruit a first, second, and third year representative at the beginning of September to join our team and support VPs.
- They attend weekly meetings and support 1-2 executives with their tasks. Our first year representative works with the VP External and Fundraising.
- The application and details will be emailed to you in the following days, and the deadline to apply will be **September 7th @ 11:59pm**

About the Program

- **Dr. Clugston**, our Undergraduate Program Coordinator, will be your first point of contact for anything related to the program/academics.
 - Course requirements, degree requirements, academic standing questions, etc.
 - Email: Physl.ug.dir@ualberta.ca
- Questions regarding enrollment for all PHYSL classes should be directed to:
 - physiologyregistrations@ualberta.ca
- Transfer into/out of the Major/Honors program is administered by the Faculty of Science (not at the Departmental level)
- Help build a network of Physiology graduates, add me on LinkedIn
 - <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/robinclugston>
- Short question period after presentation

Degree for Honour Stream

First Year Courses (EXAMPLE)

CHEM 101/102 (Intro Chem)

BIOL 107 (Intro Cell Bio)

MATH 134 (Calculus)

STAT 151 (Intro Stats)

CHEM 261 (Intro OCHEM)

6 credits ENGL or ENGL + WRS

6 credits options

- *Common electives include PSYCH 104/105, SOC 100/224/225, ECON 101, etc.*

Second Year Courses (EXAMPLE)

PHYSL 212 and 214 (first physiology classes!)

BIOCH 200 (Intro Biochem)

BIOL 207 (Genetics)

PMCOL 200 (Pharmacology)

CELL/BIOL 201 (Cell Bio)

PHYS 124 (Physics)

CHEM 263 (OCHEM II)

9 credits options

If you decide Physiology is not for you, these courses are extremely similar for many science degrees! They will not go to “waste”.

Degree for Honour Stream

Third and Fourth Year

BIOCH 320 and 330

PHYSL 372 (Systems Neuroscience)

PHYSL 310 or ANAT 200 or BIOL 330

PHYSL 371 or ZOOL 342 (Neurobiology)

6 units from:

- Any 400-level PHYSL course
(*Reproductive, Cardiovascular, Homeostatic, Sensory, Fetal, Exercise Physiology and more*)
- Non-thesis stream will require 6 additional units

15 units from:

- Various BIOL classes
- Various PSYCH
- Various ONCOL
- Various PMCOL

4th Year Research Projects

- You have the option of taking PHYSL 467 (8 hours a week in the lab) or 468/489 (16-20 hours a week in the lab; more credits). These are full year courses.
 - Or, you can take non-research literature courses, PHYSL 463 and 464.
- UPSA has plenty events and resources about the different “routes” and potential laboratories you can work in!

Degree for the Major Stream

First Year Courses

CHEM 101/102 (Intro Chem)

BIOL 107 (Intro Cell Bio)

MATH 134 (Calculus)

STAT 151 (Intro Stats)

CHEM 261 (Intro OCHEM)

6 credits ENGL or ENGL + WRS

6 credits options

- *Common electives include PSYCH 104/105, SOC 100/224/225, ECON 101, etc.*

Second Year Courses

PHYSL 210

BIOCH 200 (Intro Biochem)

BIOL 207 (Genetics)

PMCOL 200 (Pharmacology)

CELL/BIOL 201 (Cell Bio)

PHYS 124 (Physics)

CHEM 263 (OCHEM II)

9 credits options

Degree for the Major Stream

Third and Fourth Year

BIOCH 320 and 330

PHYSL 372 (Neuroscience)

ANAT 200 or BIOL 330

PHYSL 371 or ZOOL 342 (Neurobiology)

9 Units From:

- Any 400-level PHYSL

(Reproductive, Cardiovascular, Homeostatic, Sensory, Fetal, Exercise Physiology and more)

6 Units From:

- Various BIOL
- Various ONCOL
- Various PMCOL
- Various BME
- Various PSYCH

UAlberta PHYSL Catalogue

If the last few slides were a bit content heavy, this link will take you to the U of A's Physiology (Honors and Major Streams) course requirements:

[PHYSL Requirements](#)



New research course!

PHYSL 299 - Research Opportunity Program (ROP) in Physiology

1.5 units (fi 3)(EITHER, 0-0-4)

[Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry](#)

This course is designed to give students a hands-on introduction to research under the supervision of an academic member of the Department of Physiology. Recommended for students who have completed a minimum of 30 units in the Major in Physiology or Honors in Physiology programs. Note: Application does not guarantee a position. Credit for PHYSL 299 may only be obtained twice. Pre or corequisite: PHYSL 210 or PHYSL 212. Prerequisites: GPA of 2.5 or higher, and consent of the Physiology Department Chair.

No past terms

[Browse Terms](#)

No future terms

No syllabi

Fall Term 2026

Winter Term 2027

Fall Term 2026

Research Project

Section	Capacity	Class times	Login to view Locations
RSC A1 (58565)	10	 2026-09-01 - 2026-12-08	Primary Instructor: Robin Clugston

Winter Term 2027

Research Project

Section	Capacity	Class times	Login to view Locations
RSC B1 (83601)	10	 2027-01-04 - 2027-04-09	Primary Instructor: Robin Clugston

Continuation Requirements (Honors)

- A minimum GPA of 3.0 from the past Fall/Winter
 - This is a 3.0 **average** for all Fall and Winter courses; ie. if you have a course below a 3.0 that is okay!
- You must receive a grade of 3.0 (B) or higher in PHYSL 212/214 (second year courses)
- You must have a minimum of 3.0 in PHYSL courses

Continuation Requirements (Major)

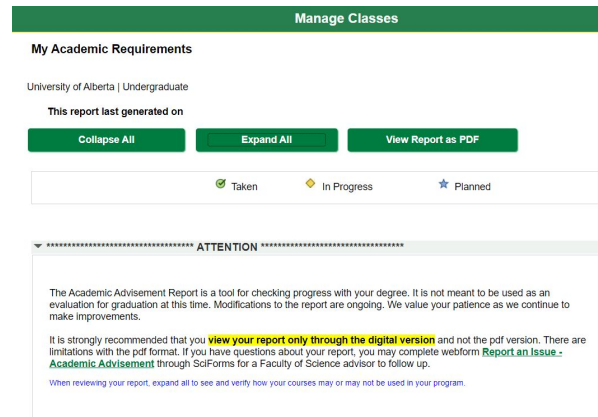
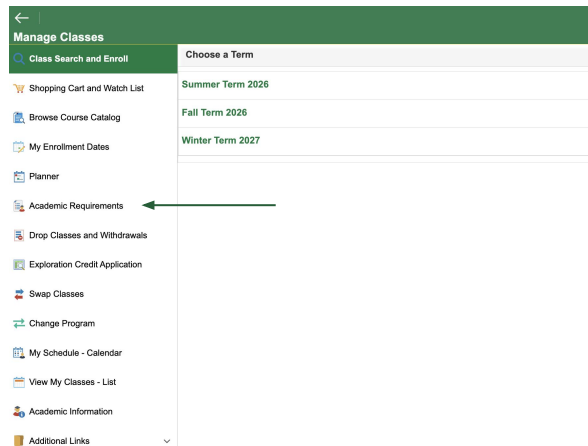
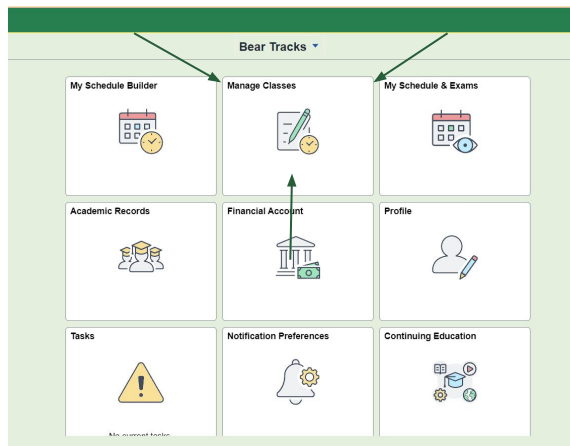
- A minimum GPA of 2.0 from the past Fall/Winter
 - This is a 2.0 **average** for all Fall and Winter courses; ie. if you have a course below a 2.0 that is okay!
- You must receive a grade of 2.3 or higher in PHYSL 210 (second year courses)
- You must have a minimum of 2.3 in PHYSL courses

Physiology is not currently eligible for a double major

Staying on Track

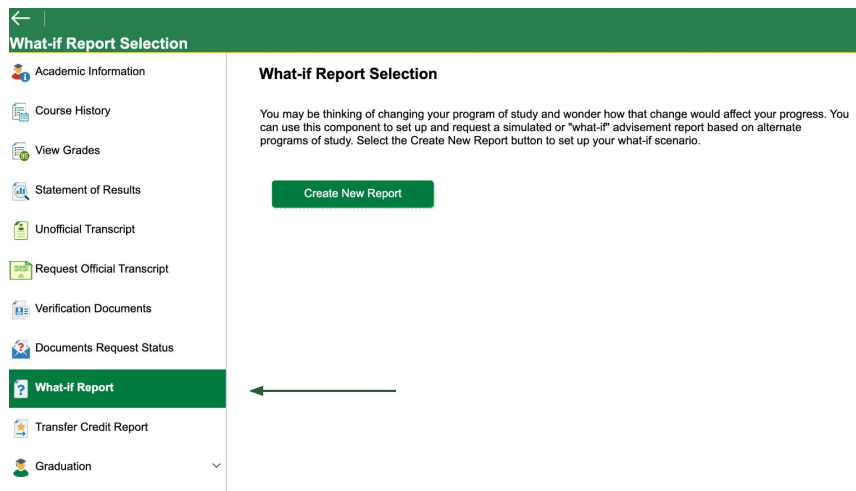
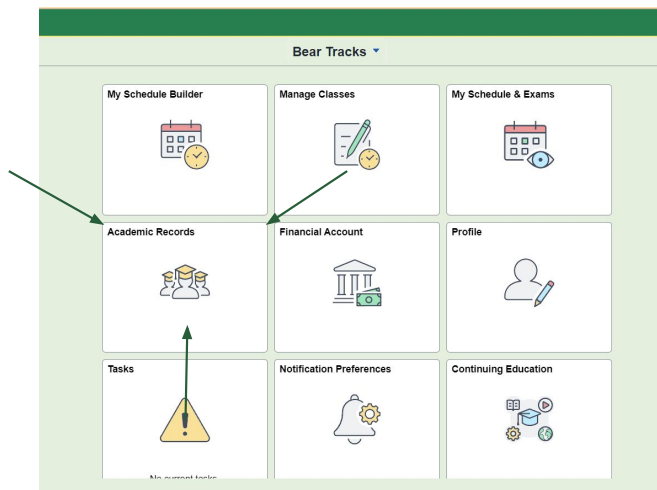
How to make sure you are on track for graduation:

- Log into your **Beartracks** account
 - Select “Manage Classes”
 - Select “Academic Requirements”
 - Beartracks will list all necessary courses, credits and how many you have completed
- This is the tool you will use to ensure you have everything needed to graduate



Program Questions

- Log into your **Beartracks** account
 - Select “Academic Records”
 - Select “What-If Report”
 - Select “View Report as a PDF”



QUESTIONS SO FAR?



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

A First Year Survival Guide

- **Dr. Shereen Hamza** is one of our Faculty Service Officers and a fan-favourite professor
 - She teaches PHYSL 400/403/409/501
 - Email: shamza@ualberta.ca
 - Feel free to reach out to her about her courses or advice in general
- Short question period after her presentation



FIRST YEAR RESOURCES



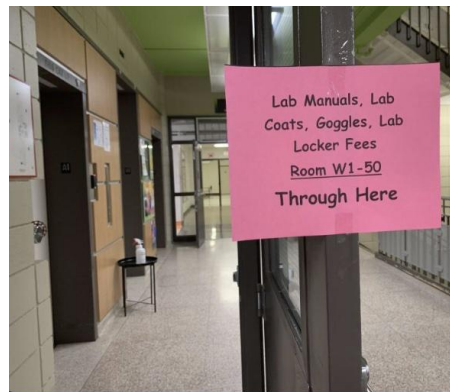
UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

What you need (and don't!)

- **Textbooks:** Don't buy until the first week of classes - you may not even need one!
 - Buy them used/find online (Facebook groups, UAlberta App, [Used Textbook Registry](#))
- **Calculators:** graphing vs. scientific; most courses only allow scientific during exams
- **Helpful Apps:** Download the Gmail app and check your UAlberta email frequently! Professors will post announcements on Canvas that will be sent there.
 - Other apps: UASU Perks, My UAlberta, note taking apps (Notability, Goodnotes, OneNote, etc.), Discord
- **Planner/Calendar:** you need a way to organize all of your due dates, deadlines, midterms, etc. so get an online calendar/physical planner started ASAP!
 - **Tip:** **READ YOUR SYLLABI.** Collect all important dates at the beginning of the semester and put them in your calendar.

Courses with Labs

- Labs will start the 2nd or 3rd week of classes and your professor/TA will provide you with more details – don't panic!
- **Lab Manuals:** you will need to purchase one for each lab course (CHEM 101, BIOL 107, etc.) at the Bookstore (located in the Student Union Building aka SUB)
- **Lab Coats/Goggles:** you will need to purchase these too. Check the Chemistry store may be cheaper than the bookstore (located in Chemistry West- room W1-50*)



How does grading work?

- **Percentage Grade:** Your raw score in a course (ex. 80%). This may be given to you, or you can calculate it manually.
 - You can use [this website](https://thegradecalculator.com/) to calculate your average (<https://thegradecalculator.com/>)
- **Letter Grade:** This is what will show up on your transcript (ex. A-, B+). It may be determined by a scale or by a set boundary depending on the course. Each letter corresponds to a 4-point GPA value.
- **Grade Point Average (GPA):** A 4-point scale determined by your letter grades.
cGPA=cumulative (ie. all courses you have ever taken).

Note: Honors GPA requirement is 3.0 per year (ie. the **average of all courses** during Fall and Winter semesters. If you have some courses below a B, that is okay!)

Conversion Chart

Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
F	0.0

Scaled vs Unscaled

For Unscaled Courses (ex. STAT 151):

- Your grade is based on set boundaries that have been predetermined.
 - Ex. 85-89% is an A-.

Score	< 50	50-52	53-55	56-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-100
Grade	F	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+

For Scaled Courses (ex. CHEM 101):

- Your grade is relative to the class average. It will depend on the distribution of the grades of all students. Most first-year courses will be scaled to 2.7, meaning the class average is a B-.
 - Ex. One section of CHEM 101 has an average of 72%, and another has an average of 62%. Both of these grades are a B-.
 - The higher the average, the higher your percentage will need to be to receive an A.
 - The passing grade may not always be 50% (sometimes lower)

Other Helpful Tips

- **Reading Room Numbers:** Building-Floor-Room
 - Ex. CCIS L1-140 is in CCIS, 1st lower level, room 140
 - Ex. KHRA 2-490 is in KHRA, second floor, room 490
 - Anything with L1 or B means basement!
 - Most buildings are like airports - look up at the signs for directions :)
 - **Tip:** Check out where your classes are before they begin!
- **Campus Resources:** [Decima Robinson Center](#) (STAT 151 + MATH 134 help), Mini Study Groups (run by ISSS), [Writing Support](#), [Tutor Registry](#), [Academic Success Workshops](#), Library workshops, etc.
- **SPOT Surveys:** At the end of each semester you have the opportunity to review/rate your instructors

Other Helpful Tips

- **RUBRIC**: Find a student club on campus and register yourself as a member (you can do this for UPSA too!)
- **OneCard**: You will need your OneCard for all of your exams (including most midterms). Pick up is at the OneCard Office in HUB or in SUB from 8:30am-4:30pm most days.
- **COSB**: Code of Student Behavior! Not knowing is not an excuse.
- Check your Tentative Exam Schedule! ("My Schedule and Exams" on BearTracks)
 - If you have lots of exams close together, consider switching profs if possible!
- Make sure any back-to-back classes aren't too far apart (ex. KHRA to Tory)
- People drop courses in September! If you are looking for a seat, keep checking

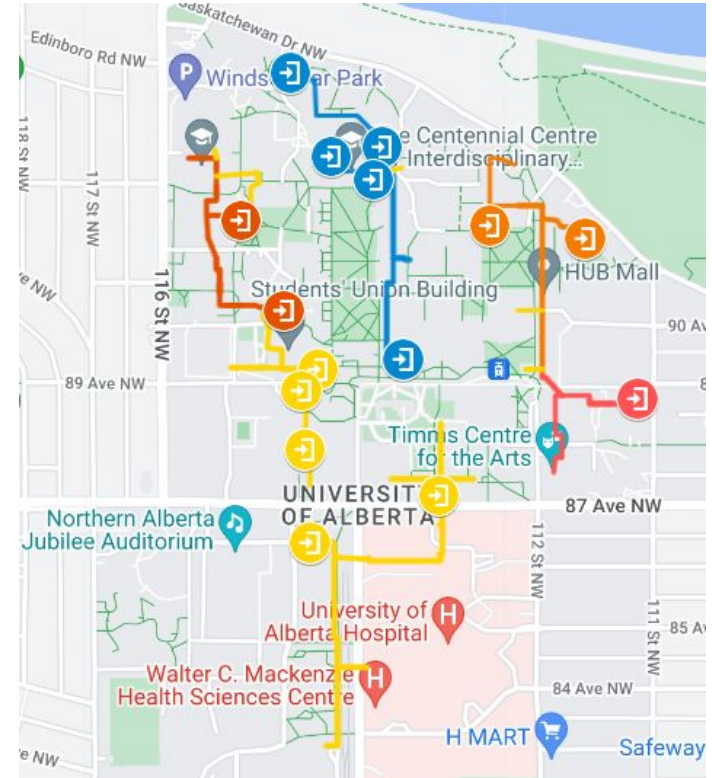
Other Helpful Tips

- Read your lab manual before your lab - know what you are doing before you begin.
- Libraries have designated silent zones (no talking) and quiet zones (light whisper). Be aware!
- The Physiology department is located on the 7th floor of Medical Sciences. Check it out :)
- Don't forget to be human! Eat, exercise, hangout with friends, practice self care, etc.



Other Helpful Tips: Pedways

- There are pedestrian walkways or “pedways” all over campus to easily connect you between buildings
- Especially helpful during the winter months
- Check out this UAlberta [Pedways 101 link](#) for more information
- Practice makes perfect! Check out these pedways before it gets cold and time how long pedway routes take you



Important September Dates

- **Sept 1-4:** [Week of Welcome](#) (WOW; includes Clubs Fair, live music, pancake breakfasts)
- **Sept 1:** First Day of Classes
- **Sept 15:** Add-Drop Deadline - no penalty for swapping/dropping courses before this date
- **Sept 18:** Interdisciplinary Bar Mixer (details to come)
- **Sept 22:** Deadline to opt-out of dental/health coverage
- **Sept 25:** UPSA Research Available to You and Meet-and-Greet BBQ (details to come)
- **Sept 30:** Fall tuition deadline (see BearTracks)



Contacts for Major

UPSA

Email: **upsa@ualberta.ca**

Instagram: **[@ualbertaupsa](https://www.instagram.com/ualbertaupsa)**

Website: **ualbertaupsa.ca**

Discord: **<https://discord.gg/TbhPkANaw>**

Faculty of SCI

Email: **advisor.science@ualberta.ca**

(include your student ID)

Office: 1-001 CCIS

Registration

Email:

physiologyregistrations@ualberta.ca

Office: 7-55 Medical Science Building

Contact for Honours

UPSA

Email: **upsa@ualberta.ca**

Instagram: **[@ualbertaupsa](https://www.instagram.com/ualbertaupsa)**

Website: **ualbertaupsa.ca**

Discord: **<https://discord.gg/TbhPkANaw>**

Robin Clugston

Email: **Physl.ug.dir@ualberta.ca**

Office: 7-49 Medical Science Building

PHYSL Office

Email:

physiologyregistrations@ualberta.ca

Office: 7-55 Medical Science Building

Check Out Our Website & PULSE Page!



The Physiology PULSE
Undergraduate Physiology Students' Association

PHYSL

Stay updated with our Instagram and Discord!



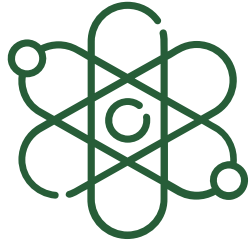
@ualbertaupsa

Follow us!!



<https://discord.gg/TbhPkANaw>

Question Period



BINGO!

- ★ Exclusive PHYSL merch for grabs
- ★ Completed your sheet? Come to the front!