



Prairie Horticulture Certificate (PHC) Program Student Guide

phc.usask.ca

To contact the PHC office go to phc.usask.ca/contact.php

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Program Overview

The Prairie Horticulture Certificate Program (PHC) is the first home-study program in horticulture designed specifically for the Prairie Provinces. It is designed for both professionals working in the horticulture industry and gardening enthusiasts.

The PHC program is recognized by the Minister of Education, Province of Saskatchewan for the Additional Qualification Certificate (AQC) for reclassification from class 4 to class 5 teaching certificate. To learn more go to: [Additional Qualification Certificate](#)

The PHC program is also approved training program by the City of Saskatoon for employee career advancement.

It is co-operatively delivered through a consortium of three Western Canadian educational institutions:

- Assiniboine Community College, Brandon, MB;
- Olds College, Olds, AB;
- University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

Each consortium partner develops and delivers courses for the program in its areas of expertise. At the University of Saskatchewan, the **College of Agriculture and Bioresources (AgBio)** and **Distance Education Unit (DEU)** offer the PHC program jointly.

Once you have applied and been accepted to the University of Saskatchewan (U of S). The U of S will be your home institution. All transactions including registration, tuition fee payment and communication are done at the U of S only, through your PAWS account. PHC courses taken from participating institutions will be treated as if they had been taken at the U of S. Upon successful completion of the program, the U of S will award your Prairie Horticulture Certificate.

To receive your certificate, you must complete all courses specified for your particular stream and maintain an overall average of 60%. A total of nine courses and a minimum of 360 hours (36 credit weights) represent the requirement for a certificate.

Applied Botany (Hort 13) and Soils for Horticulture (SISC 14) are considered foundation courses and should be completed first. Next, we recommend that you complete the required courses, followed by the elective courses.

You are allowed to enroll in 2 courses per term. PHC is designed to be a part-time program. Generally, one 60-hour (six credit weight) course or two 30-hour (three credit weight) courses would be a reasonable course load to take each term, especially if you have family, work and/or other commitments. If you wish to register in more than 2 classes per term, please contact the PHC program manager for permission.



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Expect to study eight to ten hours per week for a six-credit weight course (60 hours) and approximately half that for a three-credit weight course (30 hours) reading course materials and preparing assignments.

All courses have extensive course materials either in print form or online. Some courses will require the purchase of textbooks and/or specialized equipment (such as light meters, pruners etc.).

Assignments are submitted online, by fax or by mail. The assignments will be returned online or by mail.

Generally speaking, academic concerns are the responsibility of your course instructor. He/she is responsible for the course content, assignments, exams, and grades. Course instructors are available by email or telephone (at designated times) to answer questions and receive comments about the course. Contact information for your instructor is available in your [Class Syllabus](#)

The University of Saskatchewan Distance Education Unit (DEU) is responsible for the overall coordination of administrative matters and day-to-day activities of your courses.

Important Dates

Please review important dates and check back often to ensure that you meet all deadlines. Important dates are available on the website at [Important Dates](#)

Certification

To acquire the PHC Certificate, you are required to:

- complete the required number of core courses, together with the courses specified for a particular stream;
- maintain an overall weighted average of 60%; and
- complete a total of nine courses equivalent to 360 credit hours or 36-credit weight.

To acquire an additional PHC Certificate:

- The University of Saskatchewan will grant an additional Prairie Horticulture Certificate to anyone that has completed the required courses for the second stream and an additional 180 credit hours (18 credit weight) of new course work (not used for first certificate). Transcripts and Certificate parchments will indicate the specific stream(s) completed.

Program Streams

For information on program streams, course descriptions and program fees, go to [Program Streams](#)

Credit Hours/Credit Weight

To determine the credit hours and/or the credit weight for a particular course, simply look at the digit following the decimal in the course number. The number three indicates a three-credit weight course totaling 30 credit hours; and the number six indicates a six-credit weight course totaling 60 credit hours.



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For example, HORT 13.6 is a six-credit weight course equal to 60 hours and HORT 30.3 is a three-credit weight course totaling 30 hours. Visit the website at phc.usask.ca/courses.php to see course credit weight.

Transfer of Credits

The PHC program has provisions for transfer credit for work completed at other educational institutions deemed to be equivalent to PHC courses. A maximum of four courses (50%) may be transferred from other institutions that are not part of the consortium. If you are a University of Saskatchewan student, please download the transfer credit form at phc.usask.ca/program-overview.php and submit to the PHC Program Office for review. Official transcripts and comprehensive course outlines must be submitted with the transfer credit form.

If you are not a U of S student, contact your home institution for details at prairiehorticulture.ca/contact-us

Admission

When you apply to the University of Saskatchewan, you are granted admission to the PHC program only.

To apply to PHC, please go to phc.usask.ca/phc/requirements

All documentation must be received by the application deadline date in order to be fully admitted and permitted to register for courses by the registration deadline. Please apply early to ensure you are able to register online by the registration deadline dates, and so the course materials will reach you before the start of classes. Registration deadline dates are available on our website at [Important Dates](#)

We are not able to make exceptions to deadline dates. Please apply early to avoid disappointment.


For PHC admission requirements, visit phc.usask.ca/phc/requirements

If you wish to enroll in a degree credit course, the general admission procedures must be followed through **Recruitment and Admissions, Student and Enrolment Services** at <http://explore.usask.ca/admissions>.

Access to Course Materials and Resources

If you have registered in a course that is delivered by one of the consortium partners, Olds College or Assiniboine Community College, the PHC program office will forward your registration information, including your contact information, to that institution. They will then contact you directly.

The University of Saskatchewan delivers course materials electronically via the Blackboard Management System. Once you register in a class, the class will be found in your PAWS account under Course Tools. The class syllabus will be available one week prior to the start date. Course materials will be viewable on the first day of class. All course material will be found in this electronic package. You will



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also communicate with your instructor through the Blackboard class . Please ensure that you read all of the information in the class syllabus and on the home page of each course.

Olds College is transitioning to online delivery of PHC courses. For a period of time, some courses will be online while others will still be offered as print based courses. Learn more at <http://oldscollege.ca/phc>

Assiniboine Community College delivers their course packages electronically via Moodle®. This package will contain your course guide plus information on the instructor, assignment due dates, and ordering textbooks and/or videos. Learn more at <http://public.assiniboine.net/Programs/PrairieHorticulture.aspx>

Textbooks

Some PHC courses require textbooks, which must be purchased separately. Information is available in your class syllabus, in your PAWS account or at <http://phc.usask.ca/courses.php>

To order textbooks for courses delivered by the University of Saskatchewan, please order online at www.uofsbookstore.com

Off-Campus Library Services

Off-Campus Library Services are available to all students registered in a University of Saskatchewan course and living outside of Saskatoon. Students living in Saskatoon are required to use the Library collections and services in person. All students living outside Saskatoon are encouraged to visit the library website to become aware of the full range of resources and services available.

<http://library.usask.ca/offcampus>

DEU Writing Centre

You have free writing help. The Writing Centre provides tools and support to help you write effective essays, reports, or reviews. Simply submit a project draft, and a qualified tutor will assess your work and offer advice to improve your project. Contact the DEU Writing Centre at distance.writing@usask.ca

Awards

Each year the Prairie Horticulture Certificate program grants a PHC Distinguished Graduate award to the student who graduates with the highest academic standing in the program.

Scholarships

➤ The Saskatoon Horticulture Society (SHS) awards a \$1,000 scholarship annually. You are eligible if you are enrolled in the PHC program and have successfully completed at least 2 courses. To qualify, you must complete the course work within 4 years, be a Saskatchewan resident, volunteer at least 20 hours per year for your local Horticulture Society, and submit an essay. The application deadline is



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September 30th. Please visit the SHS website for an application form and details at www.saskatoonhortsociety.ca

➤ The Garden Writers' Association offers scholarships intended as a tuition aid or as an aid in the purchase of textbooks, garden books, and special horticultural projects. Scholarships range in amount from \$250 to \$2,000.

For more information, go to gardenwriters.org/scholarships and download the scholarship packet.

Canada Student Loans

For information:

Website: <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/education-and-learning/student-loans>

Email: studentservices@gov.sk.ca

Phone: 1.800.597.8278 toll-free

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Honesty and integrity are expected in class participation, examinations, assignments, and other academic work. It is up to you, as a student, to become informed as to how to conduct yourself in both academic and non-academic matters related to your studies. Know your responsibilities. Failing to comply with University policies may have serious consequences, including but not limited to academic penalties and/or withdrawal of service.

The importance of subject cannot be over emphasized and so this information is available:

- Class Syllabus
- On the home page of your course

Academic Honesty

Whether working and studying online, on paper or in class, you need to be aware of University of Saskatchewan policies regarding academic honesty. Please review [Academic Misconduct](#) for valuable information on responsibilities and expectations.

Computer Use Policy

The University provides its computing facilities and services to support teaching, learning, research/scholarly/artistic work and administration. The University community is entitled to use University facilities and services—including online environments such as PAWS—for these purposes. The [Network Security Policy](#) defines acceptable use of the University network, including what devices can and cannot be connected to it. It is your responsibility to read, understand and comply with these policies.

Email Policy

The [Electronic Mail Policy](#) defines acceptable use of the University's electronic mail (email) service, outlines responsibilities of both users and service providers, and provides guidelines for effective practices and processes. Please review the email policy.

Submitting Assignments

Before submitting any assignment either electronically or by mail, make a copy of it in case the original gets lost in the mail or you have computer problems. Please refer to your course material for information on the submission of assignments. Procedures will vary between delivering institutions.

Examinations

The final examination dates are listed in the [Important Dates](#) of our website. All University of Saskatchewan final examinations are online. Please note that online exams are viewed and treated the same as any other final exam. Online final exams are tracked and monitored for irregularities. Any collusion, collaborating, copying, cheating or any form of academic misconduct is a very serious offence at the University of Saskatchewan and could result in suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University of Saskatchewan *Guidelines for Academic Conduct*. More information is available at <http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/IntegrityDefined.pdf>

Final examinations are either 2 or 3 hours in length depending on the class. The individual class syllabus will contain detailed information on the final exam.

The final exam will be open for 24 hours (from 9:00 a.m. on the exam day until 9:00 a.m. the following day). Once you log in and access the exam, the clock will start ticking in which you will have only a designated number of hours (either 2 or 3 hours depending on the class) to complete the exam. At the end of that time period, you will be logged out of the exam.

Please be aware that once you have logged into the exam you cannot leave or try to navigate to another part of the course. If you do exit the exam, you will not be allowed back in as you are only allowed one attempt at this exam.

It is not possible to re-schedule final examinations as you already have a 24-hour period to write the exam. If you are scheduled to write a final examination on what would be a regular workday for you, you need to make arrangements with your employer to take time off to write your final examination.

Deferred Examinations

If you are unable to write an examination on the scheduled date because of **compassionate or health reasons**, you may apply to write the examination on the alternate date. A request for a deferred examination, along with documentary evidence, must be directed to the PHC Program Manager, Distance Education Unit (DEU), within one week of the missed examination. Please note that deferred



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examination dates are set by the University of Saskatchewan not the PHC program office or the Home Institution. The deferred examination dates can be found at [Important Dates](#)

Supplemental Examinations

Students who obtain a final course mark between 40 and 49% may, upon submission of the prescribed form and fee, apply to write a supplemental examination in the course on the deferred examination date for that term.

Evaluation

Following the completion of each course, you will be given a final percentage mark unless an alternate means of evaluation has been approved for that course. A final mark of 50% or better is required to pass a course.

Final Grades

You may access your grades through your PAWS account at <http://www.paws.usask.ca>

Appealing Your Mark(s)

Term Work

If you have a question or complaint about a mark on an assignment/lab, the first step is to contact your instructor. The quickest and easiest way to clear these matters up is to find out why you received the mark you did. Instructors are not infallible, and there may be a very simple solution to your problem.

Final Examination Marks

For final examinations, you are encouraged and strongly advised to communicate informally with your instructor before seeking a review under more formal procedures. Again, this will usually clear up any questions you may have about your final examination and your final mark. If a solution cannot be found with the instructor, please contact the PHC manager.

If you are still dissatisfied after the above process, you should apply in writing to the Associate Dean, Academic, College of Agriculture and Bioresources indicating the nature of your complaint and requesting a review. This should be used as a last resort. You will have 30 days from the release of your final mark (statement of standing) in which to initiate the first formal step (a written request for a review to the Associate Dean).

If you continue to remain dissatisfied about your standing following the routine inquiry stage in the grievance process, you can apply for a formal re-read. The re-read application form must be submitted no later than 30 days after the release of the final mark. The application must be submitted along with the required \$20 fee to the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. If the grade in the class is increased at least 5 percentage points, or from a Fail to a Pass, as a result of the re-reading, the \$20 fee will be refunded.

You should note that the final grade in a course is based on all course assessments.

If you wish to appeal your final mark, please contact the Program Manager for the required forms.

Grading System

A percentage system for reporting final grades was implemented by the University of Saskatchewan in September 1986. The university-wide descriptors and percentage scores for undergraduate courses can be viewed at <https://students.usask.ca/academics/grading/grading-system.php>

Improving Your Study Skills


As a student and especially a distance education student, you will require a great deal of persistence and self-discipline. You can expect to work six to eight hours per week per course. By keeping on top of your course work, you will save yourself from much of the stress associated with exams, assignments and course deadlines. Each term is only ten weeks long, so you cannot allow yourself to fall behind. The best method of fighting frustration and anxiety is to avoid it if at all possible. Attempt to solve course content problems by seeking help from the instructor either by email or by telephone. If you are unable to reach the instructor, contact the PHC Program Manager. Don't sit on a problem and hope it will go away—it will not! Because of the distances involved in the PHC courses, individual student progress cannot be monitored. It is impossible for us to know if you are having problems unless you take the first step and contact us.

If this is the first time you have taken a university course or the first course you have taken in a number of years, and your marks are lower than you expected on your first assignment, do not panic! University marks are generally lower than those in high schools or technical schools, etc. Although some people's marks improve at university, a good rule of thumb is that you can expect your marks to be approximately 10% lower than those you received in high school. If your marks are considerably lower than this, you may want to review your study habits and techniques, and take steps to improve them. Academic support is always available through your course instructors.

Graduation Standards

You will be eligible to receive your Prairie Horticulture Certificate after meeting the following requirements:

- **Completion of a minimum of 360 credit hours and a minimum of 9 courses**, including the required program courses in a particular stream. *Note: it is possible that nine courses in some streams will not total the required 360 credit hours.*
- **An overall weighted average grade above 60%.**
 - a. If necessary, classes may be re-taken to improve grades.



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- b. You may also take additional classes (providing that the nine-class minimum had already been met) to improve your overall weighted average grade.
 - c. In such cases, the lowest mark(s) obtained in the ten or more classes will be ignored in calculating the weighted grade average so that only the top nine marks would be used, with the proviso that all core program classes and required classes are used in calculating the overall grade weighted average.
 - d. If you wish to raise marks in core and required classes, you have an option to re-take those specific classes.
- If a course is not completed, a failing mark has to be assigned. The class not completed will be used in calculating the weighted average grade for graduation.
 - The passing grade for individual courses is 50%.
 - At least 50% of the courses taken to meet the requirements for the certificate must be taken through the PHC program.
 - **Additional PHC Certificate.** The University of Saskatchewan will grant an additional Prairie Horticulture Certificate to anyone that has completed the required courses for the second stream. A total of an additional 180 credit hours (18 credit weight) of new course work (not used for first certificate) must be completed. Transcripts and Certificate parchments will indicate the specific stream(s) completed.

Application to Graduate

Once you have completed the 9 courses totaling at least 360 credit hours and you wish to receive your PHC parchment, **you are required to submit an online Application to Graduate form through your PAWS account.**

Certificates are awarded at Spring Convocation and at Fall Convocation. The application deadline for Spring Convocation is March 31. The application deadline for Fall Convocation is August 31.

Even if you choose not to attend Convocation, you must still *Apply to Graduate* in order to receive your certificate parchment.

To access the Application to Graduate form:

- Log into your **PAWS** account at <http://paws.usask.ca>
- Select Academics
- Select Apply to Graduate under Graduation
- If the Graduation channel does not automatically appear, you may need to click on the *+browse channels* at the bottom of the menu and add the channel.



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If you are in the process of completing your last class and have not yet finished all course requirements by the end of Term 1, you will have to wait until the Fall convocation session to graduate.

If you have any questions about your program or graduation eligibility, please contact the PHC office.

Transcripts and Certificate Confirmation

To receive information about your transcripts and certificate confirmation:

- Log on to PAWS at <http://www.paws.usask.ca>
- Select Academic Tab
- Go to Transcript and Degree Confirmation

Contact Information

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the PHC office. [Contact Us](#)