

Prairie Horticulture Certificate

Student Information Handbook

Important Olds College Contact Numbers and Addresses

Registration Office:

Olds College
Continuing Education
Registrar's Office
4500 – 50 Street
Olds, AB T4H 1R6
Phone: (403) 556-4740 or
Toll Free: 1 (800) 661-6537
Email: coned@oldscollege.ca

PHC Administration Office:

Melanie Herspiegel – PHC Coordinator
Continuing Education
4500 – 50 Street
Olds, AB T4H 1R6
Phone: (403) 556-8321 or
Toll Free: 1 (800) 661-6537, ext. 8321
Email: mherspiegel@oldscollege.ca

Welcome to the Prairie Horticulture Certificate Program

This handbook has been designed to provide you with details of how we administer the Prairie Horticulture Certificate (PHC) courses, certificate requirements and about the College which are not included in your course materials package. **Please read this handbook carefully.**

Three western Canadian institutions – Assiniboine Community College (ACC – Brandon, MB), University of Saskatchewan (UofS – Saskatoon, SK), and Olds College (OC – Olds, AB) – have joined together to offer the Prairie Horticulture Certificate Program (PHC). This is the first home study horticulture certificate program specialized for the Prairie Provinces. Each school has developed courses for the certificate program in their areas of expertise (referred to as “Delivering Institution”). We are very excited to be able to share the expertise of three western Canadian educational institutions with people interested in horticulture across the country.

At Olds College, the Prairie Horticulture Certificate program is administered by Continuing Education.

Who to Contact

Instructors

Academic concerns are the responsibility of the course instructor. They are responsible for the course content, assignments, exams and for all marks.

PHC Coordinator – Olds College

The overall coordination of administrative matters is the responsibility of the Continuing Education, PHC Coordinator at the College. This office handles:

- All formal requests to withdraw (must be submitted in writing)
- The mailing of course materials
- And all other details associated with the program

The Student Services Office

The student services office handles Graduation and Official Transcripts. Student Services can be reached at studentservices@oldscollege.ca or at 403-556-8281.

If you require Learning Support Services and have not already contacted our Disability Specialist, Sandra Griffin, please ensure you do so as soon as possible. Sandra can be reached at 403-507-7945 or at sgriffin@oldscollege.ca.

Contacting Other Institutions:

Olds College will assign you a student ID number. However, when taking another institution's course, when asked for a student number, just note "Olds College Student".

The Program

You may register into the program through the institution of your choice (the “Home Institution”) by simply registering for a single course, without committing to a particular stream. You will have five years to complete the program. Upon successful completion of the program, the Prairie Horticulture Certificate of professional Education will be awarded by the Home Institution, provided that at least 50% of the program content has been taken through participating institutions.

The program consists of sets of courses which focus on specific subject areas. There are four streams of study:

- Fruit and Vegetable Production
- Greenhouse Crop Production
- Landscaping and Arboriculture
- Nursery Crop Production

To receive your certificate, you must complete all courses specified for your particular stream and maintain an overall average of 60%. Completion of 9 courses totaling at least 360 credit hours represents the minimum requirement for a certificate. You do not need to take PHC courses in any particular order. You can take as many (or as few) courses as you like, and you are free to choose courses that interest you from any stream. **If you are interested in pursuing the certificate of Professional Education, we recommend that you start with Applied Botany and/or Soils for Horticulture, then the required courses, and then work your way through the elective courses.**

You can expect to work roughly 12–15 hours per week for a 60 hour course and roughly 6-10 hours per week for a 30 hour course completing course readings and preparing assignments.

All courses are designed for home study. Some courses will require the purchase of textbooks.

Fruit and Vegetable Production Stream Requirements

Required Courses:

- Applied Botany (60 hrs)
- Soils for Horticulture (60 hrs)
- Postharvest Handling of Food Crops (30 hrs)

And at least 3 of:

- Integrated Plant Management (60 hrs)
- Safe Work/Pesticide Application (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Business Management (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Marketing (30 hrs)

And at least 2 of:

- Vegetable Production (30 hrs)
- Fruit Production (30 hrs)
- Plant Propagation (60 hrs)

Plus an Open Elective Course to meet the minimum requirement of 9 courses totaling at least 360 hours.

Greenhouse Crop Production Stream Requirements

Required Courses:

- Applied Botany (60 hrs)
- Soils for Horticulture (60 hrs)
- Greenhouse Crop Production (60 hrs)
- Greenhouse Structures and Environments (30 hrs)

And at least 3 of:

- Integrated Plant Management (60 hrs)
- Safe Work/Pesticide Application (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Business Management (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Marketing (30 hrs)

And at least 1 of:

- Indoor Landscaping (60 hrs)
- Plant Propagation (60 hrs)

Plus an Open Elective Course to meet the minimum requirement of 9 courses totaling at least 360 hours.

Landscaping and Arboriculture Stream Requirements

Required Courses:

- Applied Botany (60 hrs)
- Soils for Horticulture (60 hrs)
- Woody Landscape Plants (30 hrs)
- Arboriculture (30 hrs)

And at least 3 of:

- Integrated Plant Management (60 hrs)
- Safe Work/Pesticide Application (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Business Management (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Marketing (30 hrs)

And at least 2 of:

- Landscape Design (60 hrs)
- Landscape Construction (30 hrs)
- Indoor Landscaping (60 hrs)
- Turfgrass Production and Management (60 hrs)
- Herbaceous Landscape Plants (30 hrs)

Plus an Open Elective Course (if necessary) to meet the minimum requirement of 9 courses totaling at least 360 hours.

Nursery Crop Production Stream Requirements

Required Courses:

- Applied Botany (60 hrs)
- Soils for Horticulture (60 hrs)
- Nursery Crop Production (30 hrs)
- Plant Propagation (60 hrs)

And at least 3 of:

- Integrated Plant Management (60 hrs)
- Safe Work/Pesticide Application (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Business Management (30 hrs)
- Basics of Horticultural Marketing (30 hrs)

And at least 1 of:

- Woody Landscape Plants (30 hrs)
- Landscape Design (60 hrs)
- Landscape Construction (30 hrs)

Plus an Open Elective Course to meet the minimum requirement of 9 courses totaling at least 360 hours.

Open Electives

- Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (30 hrs)
- Floral Design (30 hrs)
- Field Production of Floral Crops (30 hrs)
- Human Resource Management (60 hrs)
- Any course from another elective stream

YOU'VE REGISTERED FOR YOUR COURSE, NOW THIS IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

Read this handbook thoroughly to understand how Olds College administers our PHC courses. If you are a returning PHC student, it is still important to read this through as this handbook may be updated annually.

Do you have the textbook that your course may require? Refer to our website to see if your course has a required textbook.

Start to think about where you will write your exam (if applicable to your course). Read through the exam application forms and decide if you can write at a regular centre or if you need to seek out a special centre. **Ensure your exam forms are sent in by the exam application deadline date.**

Read your course welcome, introduction, or schedule thoroughly as it notes all of the assignment deadline dates. **It is important that you follow and meet those deadline dates in order to be successful and stay on track in your course.**

Schedule of Fees

Tuition fees vary from course to course. The course fee is payable in full at the time of registration to our Home Institution. *Please be advised that fees are subject to change without prior notice.*

Late Registration Fees

Registration deadlines are listed on our Olds College website. Late registrations may or may not be accepted and are subject to a \$75 fee. Students will not be accepted after a course has started. Late registration fees are non-refundable.

Course Materials and Resources

If you have registered in a course that is delivered by one of the other consortium partners (UofS or ACC), your name, date of birth and address will be forwarded to that institution by Olds College.

If you are taking an online course, you will be receiving an email indicating the steps you are required to take in order to log into the class. Expect to receive the email in the week or two before the term start date.

Some courses require you to purchase a materials kit so you are equipped to do specific assignments/labs for that course using specific tools and supplies. If materials or course supplies are being mailed to you, expect to receive the package at the address you supplied upon registration

Cancellations

Students have two weeks (14 days) after the start of the term to withdraw from any course. An administration fee of \$50 per course will be charged plus any material fees (if applicable). You must write a letter to the PHC Coordinator indicating that you are cancelling (in the first 2 weeks of the course). **Refunds are NOT issued after the second week of the term.** Non-payment of fees, or failure to submit assignments does not constitute cancellation of registration. The effective date of cancellation is the date on which the letter is received. If you have registered for a course and do not officially cancel, you will be liable for all fees incurred.

Withdrawals without a refund can be made within the first five weeks of class resulting in a “W” grade. Courses dropped after the first five weeks will result in an “F” grade.

Improving Your Study Skills

As a student, you will require a great deal of persistence and self-discipline. 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, and you cannot allow yourself to fall behind because you will have very little time to catch up again. Attempt to solve course content problems by seeking help from the instructor. If you are unable to reach the instructor, contact the PHC Coordinator. Due to the distances involved in the PHC courses, it is impossible to monitor students individually so if you are having problems, please contact us.

Extensions and Term Transfers – **STRONGLY ENFORCED******

It is imperative that you meet the assignment deadlines as it will prove to be too difficult to catch up later on in the term. Falling behind for a variety of reasons is easily done, but we do not allow extensions and transfers without just cause. Extensions and Term Transfers will ONLY be granted for compassionate reasons. Supporting documents may be requested. Please call your PHC Coordinator to discuss your situation immediately so some suitable arrangement can be worked out with your instructor.

Final Examinations

A few of the PHC courses have a final examination. Final examinations will be held at selected centres throughout the prairies. These selected centres are classified as “regular” centres. No fee will be charged for writing a final examination at a regular centre.

Regular centres are designated sites where there is a large concentration of students in the surrounding area. If you are unable to write the final examination at a regular centre **because you live farther than 110 kms away**, you may apply for approval of a “special” centre and will be responsible for making your own arrangements to write the examination under the supervision of an approved Invigilator and location.

****PLEASE NOTE:** If you apply to write at a Special Centre and it is approved, you must bring a pre-paid Express Post (Canada Post Courier Service) envelop (at your expense) with you to your exam site so your Exam Invigilator can insert your written exam, seal the envelope and put it in a Canada Post Mailbox immediately after it is completed. Be sure to take off the top copy of the waybill once you have filled in the address field so you have the tracking number as it is your responsibility that your exam is received as quickly as this service will allow from your location (usually 2 – 5 business days) after your approved exam date.

If your Special Exam Centre charges you a fee, that cost is your responsibility.

Check with the following locations in your area for Exam Invigilators:

- Local Library
- Post-Secondary Institution – usually in their Library or Test Centre
- Grade or High School – ask an Administrator

Be sure to review your examination application form for further details and submission deadlines.

Deferred Examinations

The policy will provide Olds College students with the opportunity to write a final examination on a date other than the preset exam date, under specific guidelines established below.

Deferred final examinations may be granted to students who are unable to write final examinations because of personal or family illness, bereavement, severe family difficulties, religious observance or circumstances beyond their control. Deferred final examinations may differ from the original examination and may not necessarily follow the same format. Deferred final examinations will be written as quickly as possible after the Term’s End date.

Students who miss scheduled deferred final examinations(s) are denied further consideration and assigned a grade of 0 (zero) for the final examination(s).

Your Final Mark(s)

You can access your grades online at the Olds College Continuing Education Registration Site. Please login at <https://oldscollegece.augusoft.net/> Once logged in, choose Menu, then “my transcript”.

Team Work

If you have a question or complaint about a mark on an assignment/lab, the first step is to contact the person who marked it. 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

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 you are dissatisfied after the above process, or are unable to communicate informally, you should apply in writing to the Coordinator in Continuing Education indicating the nature of your complaint and requesting a review. This should be used as a last resort, once all other channels have been tried. You will have 30 days from the release of your final mark in which to initiate the first formal step.

Plagiarism

The College maintains high academic standards and is strict when it comes to plagiarism, an offence that may lead to serious academic penalties being imposed upon a student. You are not permitted to submit any portion of another person's work for credit. You may hold discussions prior to writing an assignment, but you should not collaborate with another student in the actual writing of assignments.

Certification Requirements

You will be eligible for a Prairie Horticulture Certificate when you have met the following requirements:

Students must complete a minimum of 9 courses totaling at least 360 credit hours including the required courses in a particular stream.

1. Overall average grade required for graduation is 60%.
2. Students will be permitted to take classes over to improve their grades.
3. The passing grade for individual courses is 50%.
4. At least 50% of the courses taken to meet the requirement for the certificate must be taken through the PHC Program.

Income Tax Deduction Information

We are in the process of updating this information. Check back in February 2018 for further details.

Graduation

When nearing the end of the Certificate Requirements, students must complete and submit a Graduation Application Form in order to participate in the Olds College Graduation Ceremony. Graduation Application Forms can be found online or by contacting student services at 1-800-661-6537.

Whether or not you are planning to attend Graduation Ceremonies, we ask that you declare your eligibility to Graduate. To do so, simply send an email to the PHC Coordinator and you will be placed on the Graduation List. The Graduation List will be reviewed each spring to ensure all requirements have been made. After our yearly graduation ceremonies, you will then be sent your Certificate and Official Transcript by mail.

Library Services for Olds College Distance Education Students

The Olds College Library has special services designed to meet the needs of students who live at a distance. We want to help you become a successful independent student by providing services that are equitable to those provided on campus. If you choose to use our library services, you will first need to contact the library directly to have them create a library account for you. Just indicate that you are an Olds College Distance learning student enrolled in the Prairie Horticulture Certificate program.

To learn more, visit: oldscollege.ca/library-distance