

The Career Centre

<http://careercentre.sheridaninstitute.ca>

University FAQs

Choosing Programs and Schools

What is the "best" university to apply to? There is no best university. Universities in Ontario are public and their standards are regulated to provide a quality education. Some are better known for certain things than others, but ultimately it comes down to what you want from the university and the opinions and preferences of potential employers after you graduate. For more help, pick up our "Selecting a University" leaflet.

What is a Bachelor's degree? It is the first level of study in a discipline (Master's is second, Doctorate is the highest level). Common degrees include B.A. (Arts), B.Sc (Science), B.Comm. (Commerce), B.F.A. (Fine Arts), B.B.A. (Business Administration), B.Ed. (Education - i.e., teaching).

What is an undergraduate degree? An undergraduate degree is your first degree (i.e., Bachelor's) whereas graduate degrees (e.g., B.Ed., M.A., M.B.A.) require some other degree as a prerequisite.

What is a major? Your major is the main subject you will study. When you have declared a major you will be given a list of specific core courses you must take and options from which you can select. Most degree programs require only around half (or less) of the courses you take to be related to your major so, beyond core and option courses, you have great latitude in determining the content of your studies. For example, you could do a B.A. yet take some business courses.

What is an honours degree? An honours degree is when you specialize in a subject as part of a 4 year program (general degrees are 3 years). Your honours specialization is just like a major except that you do a higher proportion of courses in that topic. Honours degrees are called Specialist degrees at some schools. Graduating is based on completing required courses and a total number of credits. Describing a degree as 3 or 4 year is only an indication of typical completion time.

Can I change programs once I am there? When applying, you must choose a degree type (e.g., B.A., B.Comm) and (in most cases) a major. If your marks are in good standing, it is usually possible to change your major at a later time. Keep in mind that you may need to catch up on some of the required (core & option) courses. Changing the degree type may be permitted in some circumstances if you have met the prerequisites for the degree program you wish to transfer to.

Applying

What is OUAC? The Ontario Universities' Application Centre coordinates all applications to degree programs at universities in Ontario, including OCAD (Ontario College of Arts & Design). OUAC is located in Guelph but is not affiliated with University of Guelph or any other school. For general info: www.ouac.on.ca

How do I apply? You initiate the process of applying by using OUAC's online application: www.ouac.on.ca/105. The self-serve system takes you through each application step, from selecting programs to ordering college transcripts. Nothing permanent happens until the final step when you pay, so it is a good idea to set up an account and become familiar with the system before you apply. Do not lose your login information. Several weeks after applying through OUAC, you will receive communication from each university with further information and a more detailed application.

How soon can I apply? What is the deadline for applying? Each September, OUAC releases an application for all entry points (January, May, September) in the following calendar year. Most undergraduate programs have application cutoff dates sometime in the spring for September entry*. However, you will have best chances if you apply by mid/late-January to ensure you are part of the first admissions cycle. Sometimes it is to your advantage to wait until January so that you are aware of your fall semester final marks.

Can I apply as a mature student? Most universities define a "mature student" as an applicant over a certain age (usually 21) and who has been out of formal education for a certain period (usually 1 or more years)**. If you are currently a full-time student you may not meet the criteria for a mature student at most universities.

Will applying as a mature student affect my chances of admission? Even if you qualify as a mature student it is not an automatic exemption from admission requirements. It simply means that the university will assess you on a more individual basis if you have life/work experience that is relevant to the academic requirements of the program you are applying to.

*Some professional programs including teaching and social work may have deadlines as early as December for September entry.

**There are a few exceptions to the out of school requirement; check Mature Student definitions listed in the OUAC application.

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Job Postings · Employment Advising · Career Events



..."Applying" FAQs, continued from reverse side.

How many universities/programs can I apply to? You can apply to as many universities as you like. The basic \$110 OUAC application fee includes three program choices. Each additional choice costs \$35. Applying to 2 programs at the same university counts as 2 choices. You can apply to a maximum of 3 programs at any one university.

What other fees are charged? Each university charges its own supplementary application fee. They range from \$40-\$65 and are collected by OUAC as part of the application process. You only pay one supplementary fee per school, regardless of how many programs you apply to at that university.

How can I pay? You can pay by cheque or credit card. Using a credit card makes your application immediate. When paying by cheque using the online system you have a set period of time in which OUAC must receive your cheque in order for them to honour your original application date. After that time, the date they receive your cheque will be deemed your application date.

How do I apply to universities outside of Ontario? You can apply to as many out-of-province/country universities as you like. You apply to each one directly, not through OUAC.

Admission, Marks & Documentation

What do universities look for in assessing college students for admission? Universities are typically most interested in capability (can you do the program?) and motivation (how much do you want to do the program?). One of the main ways to judge capability is by looking at marks. They will look at your overall average (i.e., cumulative GPA) but may put an emphasis on academic (reading, writing, theory) courses. Consistently strong academic performance is an asset but a few bad marks should not affect you as long as your overall average is still good. In most cases they will look at all marks (including high school) but are more likely to put an emphasis on your college marks as recent performance is seen as the best indicator of future performance.

How do I find out my current/cumulative GPA? You can view all your marks on AccessSheridan or you can request a printed unofficial transcript from the Registrars Office. It is useful to understand how your GPA is calculated when attempting to estimate or project your GPA. The *Sheridan Student Information Guide* (available on the web under "Current Students") explains it.

What is an official transcript? An official transcript bears the stamp of the issuing school and is in a sealed envelope. Universities require official high school and college transcripts. If you are late in the application cycle, they may accept unofficial ones (i.e., copies issued directly to you) until they receive official ones. Do not send transcripts to OUAC. Separate transcripts must be sent to each university.

How do I request transcripts from high school and/or Sheridan? As part of the OUAC application process, you can request that your Sheridan transcript be sent to the schools you are applying to. There is no additional charge for this. Sheridan will send them directly to the schools you indicate. For secondary school transcripts, contact the last high school you attended. Your high school may send transcripts directly or give you sealed envelopes to address and mail to universities yourself.

How long does it take Sheridan to send transcripts? Transcript orders are processed as they are received. Allow 2-4 weeks.

I don't want my high school marks (or college marks) used—can they be left out? The application asks you to disclose all secondary and post-secondary education, and to account for your time while out of full-time education. This is also included in the declaration you must sign as part of the application process.

Transfer Credits, etc

Can I get credit at university for what I have done at Sheridan? It depends on several factors including:

- the university - some are known to be more accommodating in how they assess college courses than others
- program relevance - how much crossover is there between your college program and the university degree
- your marks - generally, you have better chances with a GPA in the mid-3 range and above
- whether there is a formal transfer agreement or policy for college transfer students.

What is a transfer agreement? Also known as an "articulation agreement", it is a specific written understanding that specifies how much course credit you may be entitled to when moving from a specific program at Sheridan to a related program at a specific university. It usually lists minimum GPA for consideration but keep in mind that being eligible is not a guarantee because other applicants may exceed that minimum. Ontario transfer agreements are detailed at: www.ocutg.on.ca

What if there is no transfer agreement? You may still be eligible for transfer credit. Search the university web site for a general policy toward college transfer students. Sometimes you may qualify to receive a block of unspecified transfer credit in recognition of good marks and time spent at college. If there is no such policy you can apply for advanced standing on a course-by-course basis once you are admitted to the university.

What is advanced standing? If there is a course at university that has similar learning outcomes, evaluation methods, and classroom hours as a course(s) in which you got good marks at Sheridan you can apply for advanced standing, which means it will count as a course in your university program without having to actually do it. They will want to see the Sheridan course outline and you will have to pay a fee for the assessment of advanced standing. Ultimately, it is up to the university whether to grant advanced standing.

Where can I view course outlines? Applying for advanced standing does not guarantee you will receive it. You can make your own initial assessment by comparing the university course outline with the Sheridan one. For Sheridan course outlines: www.sheridanc.on.ca/academic/courseoutlines/

Can I appeal advanced standing decisions made by the university? Usually, but there may be a fee to have your application reassessed. Ask the university's Student Union for advice.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

These answers to questions frequently asked by students are intended as general guidance and do not replace professional advice. Always be sure to check university web sites for the most-up-to-date admission information and requirements.

Need more help?

Career Counsellors are available to help you with career exploration and educational planning. No appointment necessary. Simply come by during drop-in hours.

Career Counsellor Weekly Drop-In Times*		
Day	Trafalgar D103	Davis B219
Monday	2:00 - 4:00	1:00 - 3:00
Tuesday	10:00 - 12:00	10:00 - 12:00
Wednesday	10:00 - 12:00	11:00 - 1:00
Thursday	2:00 - 4:00	1:00 - 3:00
Friday	11:00 - 1:00	10:00 - 12:00