

2021 U-Pass Referendum

2021 U-Pass Referendum Results

Following the release of the provisional results in the 2021 U-Pass Referendum on 25 February 2021 please find below the official results of the 2021 U-Pass Referendum:

Yes	858
No	198

Result: Continuation of the U-Pass was approved in the 2021 GSA U-Pass Referendum.

More information on U-Pass is available on the [GSA website](#) .

Background information on U-Pass and the 2021 U-Pass Referendum question can be found below.

Background Information

U-Pass is the student group discount program that provides students with unlimited public transit offered by Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, Beaumont, and Route 747 (airport route).

In 2006, the GSA, along with the University of Alberta Students' Union and the MacEwan, Norquest, and NAIT student associations, negotiated to implement the initial U-Pass program. The first GSA U-Pass referendum was approved in 2007 and subsequent referenda have been approved in 2010, 2013, and 2017.

More information about the U-Pass can be found [here](#) .

Until recently, the University of Alberta subsidized the U-Pass fee for its students in order to promote public transit use (the only post-secondary institution to do this). This subsidy, in 2020-2021, offsets the total U-Pass cost of \$180/term by \$22/term, such that University of Alberta students pay \$158/term for the U-Pass while students at MacEwan, Norquest, and NAIT pay \$180/term for the U-Pass, as their institutions do not offer a subsidy. *Please note: The U-Pass program has been suspended in 2020-2021 due to the remote delivery of most University of Alberta programs; \$158/term would have been the fee assessed had the U-Pass program been active.*

Due to budget constraints, the University of Alberta has ended its subsidization of the program. This puts the University of Alberta in line with MacEwan, Norquest, and NAIT. Factoring out the University's subsidy, which will not be provided moving forward, the cost of the U-Pass will be \$180/term (the amount currently paid by non-University of Alberta students).

The current U-Pass agreement is due to expire on 31 August 2021. After negotiation, an agreement-in principle was reached that would see the cost of the U-Pass set at \$180/term, with no further increases for the 2021-2025 agreement .

In addition to no increase in the cost for this four-year period, a test-pilot program will be enacted for the length of the new agreement (with an eye to possible inclusion in future agreements) concerning additional opt-outs under the U-Pass program for:

- Seniors (any student over the age of 65 at the start of a given academic term);
- Recipients of the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program (any student who can demonstrate participation in the AISH program); *and*
- Distance (any student who can demonstrate their principal residence is greater than 100

km from Edmonton).

In November 2020 GSA Council, pursuant to GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda, approved the wording for the 2021 U-Pass referendum question and the holding of the referendum.

U-Pass Referendum Question

Do you support the continuation of the Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) subject to the following conditions:

- The U-Pass would provide unlimited usage of regular transit systems in Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, Beaumont, and Route 747 (airport route) within the participating municipalities' service area during the Fall, Winter, and/or Spring/Summer (May-August) terms to all continuing graduate students enrolled in at least one course for credit in a term (includes thesis registrations);
- The cost of the U-Pass fee to each graduate student would be mandatory and set at **\$180/term** (for each of the Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer terms), beginning 1 September 2021 and extending to 31 August 2025;
- Under certain circumstances, some graduate students would continue to be exempt or eligible to opt-out of the U-Pass program (below are excerpts from the current U-Pass agreement concerning opt-out provisions, with no changes being proposed, and from the proposed Opt-Out Pilot program regarding the additional opt-outs, taken from the recently reached agreement-in-principle).

Excerpt from the 2017-2021 U-Pass Agreement (no changes proposed)

The following graduate students would be exempt from the U-Pass program:

- “ a) a Student who is not enrolled in any course for credit located on a University of Alberta campus within any of the Municipalities for that School Term;
- b) a Student who is enrolled only in the Executive MBA program;
- c) a graduate Student who is designated as an off-campus thesis student by the University;
- and*
- d) a Student who is enrolled only in a program of study offered by the University's Faculty of Extension, which program of study leads to a certificate.”

The following graduate students would be eligible to opt-out of the U-Pass program:

- “a) a Student who has a valid Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS) registration, Strathcona County Mobility Bus registration, or St. Albert Handibus registration, Spruce Grove Specialized Transit Service (STS) registration, Fort Saskatchewan Special Transportation Services Society (STSS) registration, or Leduc Assisted Transportation Services (LATS) registration; and is able to prove their registration with a valid photo ID card;
- b) a Student who has a valid CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) registration and is able to confirm such registration with a valid CNIB-issued photo ID card;
- c) a Student who is currently an employee of a transit system owned and operated by any of the Municipalities and is able to provide written confirmation on official letterhead of their employment at the beginning of each School Term; *and*
- d) a Student who, pursuant to official University regulations, policies or procedures (as may be amended from time to time) respecting registration and fees assessments, has the option of being assessed the athletics and recreation fee or the health services fee by the University, and who is in a cooperative work experience program or work internship and who is registered only in one or more courses designated as “Work Experience” for that School Term, and who is either:

1. For Fall and Winter Terms - fulfilling their course requirements outside the boundaries of

- the Municipalities for the majority of the School Term; or
2. For Spring/Summer Term – fulfilling the majority of their course requirements outside of the boundaries of the Municipalities; or
- e) a Student who is enrolled at another post-secondary educational institution and is required to participate in a transportation program similar to the U-Pass Program (if any) being offered to students of this other post-secondary educational institution by said institution and the Municipalities.”

Excerpt from the 2021-2025 U-Pass Agreement-in-Principle: Schedule A – U-Pass Opt-Out Pilot Program

Pilot Opt-Outs:

“Students who are Seniors

- Eligibility - Students who turns 65 years or older before an Academic Term begins
- Eligibility Determination - Students to provide a identification to a Students’ Association representative, demonstrating their age is over 65 at or before the beginning of the term

Students who are on AISH

- Eligibility - Students who participate in the AISH program immediately before an Academic Term begins
- Eligibility Determination - Students to provide AISH documentation to a Students’ Association representative, demonstrating participation in the AISH program

Students who must Commute Long Distances

- Eligibility - Students whose principal residence is greater than 100km from their post-secondary institution
- Eligibility Determination - Students to provide principal residence documentation to a Students’ Association representative”