



My McGill

“As an entering university student, taking on new responsibilities that will impact and shape your future can be quite intimidating. Nevertheless, the McGill community truly offered me a ‘second home’, allowing me to grow as a person in a safe environment while still being able to live unforgettable and fun experiences. Overall, the main lesson I have gotten from my years here is not to be afraid to ask friends, advisors and professors for help when you need it, whether it be on which classes to take, mental health or what next steps you should take for your future career.”

Melanie Baume, B.A. 2021

Course Registration

Registering for courses through Minerva can feel like a daunting task at first but no worries! This section will help you make sense of all the links, acronyms, and boxes you will see when registering for your classes.

F.A.Q.

Q: MINERVA CRASHED AND I WAS NOT ABLE TO REGISTER FOR THE CLASSES I WANTED. WHAT DO I DO?

This has happened to everyone at least once! Try first talking to an academic advisor about your options, you can check **page 77**. Many students will change their schedule in the first few weeks of the semester so make sure to check Minerva for open spaces to get a spot. It is also a good idea to reach out to the professor to see if they can get you into your desired class. Many students spend a dollar to register on getaseat.ca which will alert you via email or text about when a spot opens in the class.

Q: WHAT IS "ADD/DROP" ?

The add/drop period runs from the first day of class September 14 (and until January 18 in the Winter semester). During this time, you can change your schedule as much as you like without worrying about penalties. The Add/Drop will give you the opportunity to explore different subjects and times to figure out your schedule and what works best for you. Instructors are not allowed to assign any graded work during this time and are not allowed to penalize students for missing grades or assignments during the add/drop. (you can check **page 67** for more information on your academic rights).

Q: WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN IT SAYS A CLASS HAS A "WAITLIST"? HOW DO I GET ON ONE?

Not all courses will have a waitlist. If a course page on Minerva says "WVL Rem" (Waitlist Remaining) column, and the "Rem" is greater than 0, then there is space on the waitlist. Students who are on the top of the waitlist will be sent an email allowing them to register for the course within the next 24 hours. If the student does not register in the allotted time, they will lose their place on the waitlist. During this period, spaces that are open are reserved for the next student on the waitlist. Even if they seem to be available, no one else is allowed to register. If you are sent an invitation to register, you should accept or reject it as soon as possible to be considerate of the other students on the waitlist. You can check your status on the waitlist by going to "View Student Schedule by Course Section" within Minerva's Registration Menu.

Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN U0 AND U1?

If you come to McGill as a student with advanced standing (you have at least 24 existing course credits equal to McGill course credits), you will be in U1. This will generally apply to students who already have enough AP or IB credits, went to CEGEP, or have transferred from another university. You can find out about your status online on Minerva by searching for "Registration Eligibility." If you are in U1, it will say if you are a "UG Level Year 1 New." If you have no credits prior to arriving at McGill, this means you are a U0. As a U0, you will have to complete your faculty's Freshman year program of 30 introductory level credits. (For more information go to **page 70** and check your faculty website or set up a meeting with an academic advisor.)

SSMU MINICOURSES

The SSMU Mini Courses are fun, inexpensive, and non-credit courses offered to students and the Montreal community. It encourages students to develop knowledge and skills that are helpful inside and outside the classroom. You find more information [here: \(ssmu.ca/student-life/minicourses/\)](https://ssmu.ca/student-life/minicourses/)

Textbooks

Textbooks and course-packs are vital to your success in class. However, both can get expensive and as a university student, you may be on a budget. Below are some ways to save money on textbooks. Be aware that some textbooks have single use online access codes preventing you from using a second-hand book for class. As of January 2021, the McGill Library will be a great way to get access to course-related material including digital course packs. Coursepacks will be free at no additional cost to the student.

The most common places for students to buy textbooks are:

LE JAMES MCGILL BOOKSTORE
680 Sherbrooke Street West
lejames.ca

The services provided by LE JAMES were completely online last year due to COVID-19 with the option of delivery to the address of your choice or pickup. With COVID restrictions being lifted - we are hopeful that the bookstore will be open to the public this fall semester, while continuing to follow Government and University directives. Follow the bookstore on Social Media and sign up to their newsletter to keep up to date.

To order course materials online: lejames.ca/textbook
To sign up to the newsletter: lejames.ca/newsletter-signup

PARAGRAPHE BOOKSTORE
2220 McGill College Avenue
Paragraphbooks.com

Paragraphe bookstore is a great location to get many of the course materials you will need for the semester. They have shelves labeled with different course numbers and the books the professor wants you to get for the class. They offer textbooks, books, and course packs.

WORD(THE)
469 Milton Street
Wordbookstore.ca

Word is a small independent book store that offers secondhand books focused on literature, philosophy, political science, and poetry. Most of the books offered are affordable so make sure to check out this spot not too far from campus. They also offer textbooks.

TIPS TO SAVE MONEY:

RENT/BUY YOUR TEXTBOOKS FROM AMAZON.

They will often be cheaper than Le James. Students who have a valid .edu email address can join Amazon Prime Student, which has additional deals.

BUY AN EARLIER EDITION.

Once a newer version of a textbook is released, the older ones get a lot cheaper. Make sure to ask your professor if it is okay, since older editions may no longer have up-to-date information!

BUY YOUR TEXTBOOKS SECONDHAND.

Le James will occasionally have used copies and have copies in limited supply, so check McGill Facebook groups and used bookstores (like The Word on Milton). Check online for a free version if it is an older text.

LOOK FOR AN OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE (OER) ON THE TOPIC YOUR COURSE COVERS.

OERs are free, online, and frequently peer-reviewed academic resources. Check out openstax.org, bccampus.ca, the McGill library, or the SSMU OER webpage to check if there is an OER for your course!

ASK YOUR PROFESSOR FOR HELP

It is a good idea to ask your professors to scan relevant readings or textbook passages and upload them to MyCourses. This might not always be possible, but some professors are more than willing to make all relevant information available online.

Libraries

Montreal has many different types of places to go study, including cafes and parks, but nothing compares like McGill's libraries. They are probably the most important hotspot for students to gather and study. There are seven libraries in the downtown campus, so take the time to find your perfect study space in the first few weeks of the semester. The hours for each library vary, so check out [mcgill.ca/library/](https://mcgill.ca/library/branches) to make sure your spot will be open when you want to study!



MCLENNAN-REDPATH LIBRARY COMPLEX

3459 Rue McTavish

Best For: A great location to study as a group, with lots of different environments featuring varied seating arrangements and noise levels. Head down to the basement cafeteria for snacks and a study break. Be aware of the overpriced coffee in the basement cafeteria.



BLACKADER-LAUTERMAN LIBRARY

Redpath Library, floor 3

3459 Rue McTavish

Best For: A semi-secret study space located up a back stairwell in McLennan, Blackader is the home of McGill's Architecture and Art collection. It also has a great view of campus.



SCHULICH LIBRARY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

809 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest

Best For: Schulich Library is popular due to its 24/7 accessibility. Unfortunately, this study space will be closed for renovations until 2022.



MARVIN DUCHOW MUSIC LIBRARY

Elizabeth Wirth Music Building, 3-5,

entrance on 3rd floor

527 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest

Best For: This ultra-modern, sun-filled library is renowned for its easy access to the RVC Cafeteria, Vinh's Too Vietnamese Restaurant, and Starbucks. Although it has a three floor range, space is limited and those in the faculty of Music are given priority.



NAHUM GELBER LAW LIBRARY

3660 Rue Peel, floors 2-5

Best For: The Law Library is for those students who really need to get their homework done. The library takes their no-speaking and no-eating policy very seriously, so make sure to leave your friends and snacks at the door.



BIRKS READING ROOM

William and Henry Birks Building, floor 2

3520 Rue University

Best For: The Birks Reading Room has a classic atmosphere that is different from other libraries on campus. It is located in the upper level of the Birks building on Sherbrooke. This location is a blast in the past as it is a cozy reading room with many shelves full of antiquated books.



ISLAMIC STUDIES LIBRARY

3485 rue McTavish

Best For: The Islamic Studies Library is at the centre of campus and is a great location for readings between classes. Also, it is a beautiful place to get work done as it is the most aesthetically-pleasing study spot.



GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTRE

Burnside Hall, floor 5

805 rue Sherbrooke Ouest

Best For: A little-known study room, the GIC has open workspaces for group study, private review, or any other kind of academic prep you need to know.

Studying

STUDY TIPS

McGill asks a lot of its students academically. Although your first semester might be challenging, there are plenty of ways to make sure you stay on track. It is important to remember to not push yourself to the limit. Part of being in university is learning from your mistakes and there is plenty to learn throughout your career at McGill.

UTILIZE A DAY PLANNER

Use the calendar in the back of this book to help you keep track of your time, tasks, and events so you do not miss anything.

GO TO A STUDYING SKILLS WORKSHOP

The office for students with Disabilities, Student Wellness Hub, and Campus Life & Engagement all offer these kinds of workshops throughout the year.

Grading

Your Grade Point Average (GPA) for each term, as well as your GPA for your whole entree, is listed on your unofficial transcript in Minerva (go to Student > Student Records Menu > View Unofficial Transcript).

Below is the basic grading scale for McGill. Grades that are required to pass a class differ between faculties, so always check in with your faculty first.

TERMS TO KNOW

CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE (CGPA)

This is your GPA for your entire degree at McGill.

PASS/FAIL OR SATISFACTORY/UNSATISFACTORY OPTION (S/U)

Opting to take a course Pass/Fail means a course will not count toward your GPA — you either pass or fail the course. There are strict rules for taking a pass/fail course (e.g. you can only do it for electives), so it is wise to see an advisor before choosing to take one.

TAKE A BREAK FROM THE LIBRARY

Make sure to take a break from the library and go to an unconventional location to go study. Flip to **page 37** for a list of cheap eateries to check out.

DO NOT CRAM

Everybody does it at least once, but make sure to spread out your studying over time so that you can retain information better and see the big picture.

TRY TO SLEEP, EAT WELL, AND STAY ACTIVE

Taking care of yourself while you study can be hard, but it is vital for more focused studying and for your physical and mental health.

TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR AND YOUR TA DURING OFFICE HOURS

It is their job to make sure you understand the content, so it can only be beneficial to approach them to get their help. It is great to establish a relationship with your professors in the long run as well.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

When you have a GPA that is below 2.0, you are placed on academic probation. You will be reinstated once you raise it to 2.5. If you fall below a 1.5, you will need to be placed in Unsatisfactory Standing and must request readmission to your program. Contact your advisor if you are in this situation.

K

On a transcript, this means “incomplete” because your deadline to submit work in a course was extended. If you are struggling, especially due to medical issues, and think you need some extra time, contact your advisor or a Student Advocacy group.

L

On a transcript, this means that you deferred a final exam. An “L” will stay on your transcript until you take the deferred exam and receive the grade for that course.

W

On a transcript, this means that you withdrew from a course with the permission of your instructor and the University.

GRADES	GRADES POINTS	NUMERICAL SCALE
A	4.0	85-100
A-	3.7	80-84
B+	3.3	75-79
B	3.0	70-74
B-	2.7	65-69
C+	2.3	60-64
C	2.0	55-59
D	1.0	50-54
F(Fail)	0	0-49

SATISFACTORY PASS

Needed for courses that fulfill program requirements

CONDITIONAL PASS

FAILURE

Exams

Exams can be tough, especially when it's your first time writing them at university. These FAQs should help you understand what the process is like, so you can focus on hitting the books. For advice on study tips and study spaces, you can flip to **page 73 and 84-85**. If you're feeling overwhelmed, flip to page 50 for information on the services available to you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q: WHEN ARE MY EXAMS?

The tentative dates for the exam schedule is usually published around the fifth week of the semester. The final one will not come out until two weeks later. Make sure to wait for your final exam schedule to come out before you make any travel plans. McGill does not take travel as an excuse for missing an exam.

Q: WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO AN EXAM?

Most important thing to bring (besides yourself) is your student ID! You will need a valid card in order to write your exam. When you are writing the exam, you are not allowed to have any of your belongings with you, so make sure to leave all your valuables at home. Do not forget to eat well and bring water for your exams.

a supplemental exam costs \$35, and you can apply on Minerva. Some faculties will not allow supplemental exams (Agriculture, Environment Sciences, Management, Music, Engineering, etc).

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMETHING GOES TERRIBLY WRONG AND I CAN'T WRITE MY EXAM?

If you are not able to write an exam due to illness, family passing, or another serious reason, you can apply to defer your exam. To do so, first head to Minerva and fill out the deferral form (Student Menu > Student Records Menu > Deferred Exam Application). Then you must present documentation, like a doctor's note, to your faculty's office as soon as possible. Deferred exams are generally scheduled about a semester later. McGill has a very informative write-up on exam deferrals here: mcgill.ca/exams.dated/mcpgdef#deferred.

74 Q: WHAT IS AN "EXAM ACCOMMODATION"?

Students who are registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities can request alternative exam accommodations. There is a seven day deadline to sign up for accommodations, so be sure to inform the OSD in advance. It is also important to let the OSD know if you would rather write your finals with the rest of your class.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT PASS MY EXAM?

If you receive a D, F, J or U on a final exam and are in satisfactory or probationary standing, you may be able to write a supplemental exam. Keep in mind that your original and supplemental grades will appear on your transcript and in your CGPA. Your supplemental exam will count for a large percentage of your final exam. Writing

Q: WHAT IS AN "EXAM CONFLICT" AND HOW DO I HANDLE ONE?

You have an exam conflict if you have:

- Two exams at the same time
- Three exams in one day
- Three consecutive exams in twenty-four hours
- Four exams in two days
- Five exams in three days

Usually, McGill will let you know if you have an exam conflict. However, if you are not alerted, you must fill out a Final Exam Conflict Form and submit it to Service Point. You can find the form at mcgill.ca/exams/final-exam-conflict-form.

Remember, travel arrangements do not qualify as a conflict, so make sure to make plans after the final schedule is released! You can also request religious accommodation for an exam. The deadline for requesting accommodation is four weeks before the exam period begins. Make sure to fill out the Conflict form that was mentioned above.

Tutoring

The first year at McGill means adjusting to new study strategies, tactics, and schedules. Classes at McGill are known to be hard so it is normal to seek out extra assistance. Try contacting one of the resources listed below for advice on new habits and for help on difficult subjects. You should also reach out to your departmental association for free tutoring, but do it sooner than later. Working with a tutor can help you prep without having to cram and will also alleviate stress.

MCGILL TUTORIAL SERVICE mcgill.ca/tutoring/ Tutoring.service@mcgill.ca

McGill's Tutorial Service offers academic assistance from qualified and vetted students. It costs eighteen dollars an hour, but first-year students get the first hour free! If you are an Indigenous student, a Varsity athlete, a Mastercard Scholar, registered with the OSD, or on academic probation, the cost of a tutor is subsidized and even free. Students that are enrolled at McGill are eligible to request a tutor, register for a webinar, or benefit from their self-directed learning materials. To request a tutor, fill the form at: mcgill.ca/tutoring/tutor-request-form.

MCGILL WRITING CENTRE mcgill.ca/mwc/ mwctutorial@mcgill.ca

The McGill Writing Centre offers up to seven hours of support per semester and will help you with any stage of the writing process. Note that they do not just proofread your essays but actively help you to build the writing skills needed for the future. The Centre books fast during the paper-writing season so make sure to get a space early and register for an appointment using your McGill email.

ENGINEERING PEER TUTORING

mcgill.ca/engineering/students/undergraduate/mesc/engineering-peer-tutoring-service
Epts@mcgillus.ca

Sponsored by the Engineering Undergraduate Society (EUS) and McGill Engineering Student Service (MESC), EPTS is a free tutoring service for undergraduate Engineering students. This service has upper-level undergraduate tutors from all departments available for weekly drop-ins to help U0/U1 students with many of their courses. EPTS tutors also offer free midterm and final review sessions for U0, U1, and upper year (300+) level courses.

The Science Undergraduate Society (SUS)'s Peer Tutoring Service peertutors.sus.mcgill.ca/ Suspeertutors@gmail.com

The SUS's service provides 100% free one-on-one tutoring, group tutorials, help desks, and review sessions from qualified student volunteers.

ARTS UNDERGRADUATE SOCIETY (AUS) ESSAY CENTRE ausmcgill.com/services/aus-essay-centre/ Aus.essay.centre@gmail.com

If you are struggling with an essay and need help with grammar, citations, structure or simply want someone to proofread your work, the Essay Centre tutors can provide free peer editing services when you bring a physical copy of your essay. They are very helpful when it comes to figuring out citation rules and will provide editing assistance in either French or English. Visit their website to meet the tutors and to figure out which is your best option to get help.

Mentoring

McGill has an abundant number of mentorship programs meant for undergraduate students. Mentorship programs are a great way to get advice from someone who has been there before. Check in with your advisors about faculty- or department-specific mentorships, or look into these specialized programs explained below.

INDIGENOUS STUDENT MENTORSHIP

Peer-to-peer mentoring for Indigenous students.

WHO?

Mentoring by volunteer graduate and upper-year undergraduate students.

HOW?

Helps connect with the McGill community, navigate your first year, and familiarize yourself with university life.

WHERE?

First Peoples House at fph.mentorship@mcgill.ca

OFFICE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES MENTOR PROGRAM

Peer-to-peer support for diverse learning.

WHO?

Mentoring by graduate and upper-years earlier

WHAT?

Students who are registered with the OSD can receive mentoring to ease the transition to university and develop their networks and skill sets.

WHERE:

OSD at [/www.mcgill.ca/osd/student-resources/peer-peer-supports/mentoring](http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/student-resources/peer-peer-supports/mentoring) .

MC GILL MENTOR PROGRAM

Provides career guidance to any McGill undergraduate.

WHO?

Mentoring by McGill alumni.

WHAT?

Two-month mentorship for students, including helpful career path advice from successful alumni. Beware — this is not meant as a job placement.

WHERE?

Career Planning Services (CaPS) at mentor.caps@mcgill.ca or mcgill.ca/caps/students/services/mentor

THE INTERNATIONAL BUDDY PROGRAM

Peer-to-peer support for new international students.

WHO?

Mentoring by returning McGill students.

WHAT?

Helps facilitate making friends in Montreal while giving language support, cultural guidance, and info about McGill.

WHERE?

The International Student Services (ISS) at mcgillbuddyprogram.com/ .

HOMEWORK ZONE

mcgill.ca/branches-program/school-outreach/hz

Are you interested in becoming a mentor? Homework Zone (HZ) is a McGill after-school mentoring program that connects you with elementary and secondary school students in schools around Montreal, and in Kahnawa:ke.

Academic Advising

mcgill.ca/students/advising/advisordirectory

Advisors help you navigate the complex administrative bureaucracy that is McGill and help plan your degree! They are here to help integrate into campus life, plan your class schedule, give you access to special classes, and keep you updated on opportunities related to your degree. There is usually a rush to see advisors at the start of each semester, so plan accordingly and prepare for lines that stretch into the hallway. There are also Peer Advisors, who are trained to help you with academic and non-academic concerns. Make sure to check out the Advisor Directory to find the advisor who can best help you!

A good tip is to visit an advisor at least once a year to ensure you are on the right track. Many students are confused or make mistakes about their course requirements and checking in can help you avoid graduating later than planned.

WHO DOES THE ADVISING

Faculty Advisors

WHERE?

Find them in the Student Affairs of each faculty.

WHAT?

Advise you on general issues related to your faculty. Offer guidance on choosing majors and minors and planning credit loads. Assist you in transferring faculties and understanding program rules. Help manage your academics during times of difficulty.

DEPARTMENTAL ADVISORS

WHERE?

Go to your department website to see which professor is the advisor for your program (Major, Minor, Honours, Joint Honours, etc) and their office hours. It is recommended that you send an email about your goals first so that they can prepare once you meet.

WHAT?

Advise you on the issues related to your specific program.

Assist with course approvals, ensure you are reaching departmental graduation requirements, and evaluate course equivalency requests.

Provide information on specific courses, internships, and scholarships.

Offer support and referrals during academic or personal difficulty.

PROFESSORS

WHO?

Although not official advisors, they can help with your specific field of interest.

WHAT?

Advise you about the latest research trends and recommend readings.

Share and brainstorm potential essay ideas or research topics.

Discuss potential research opportunities.

Write recommendation letters.