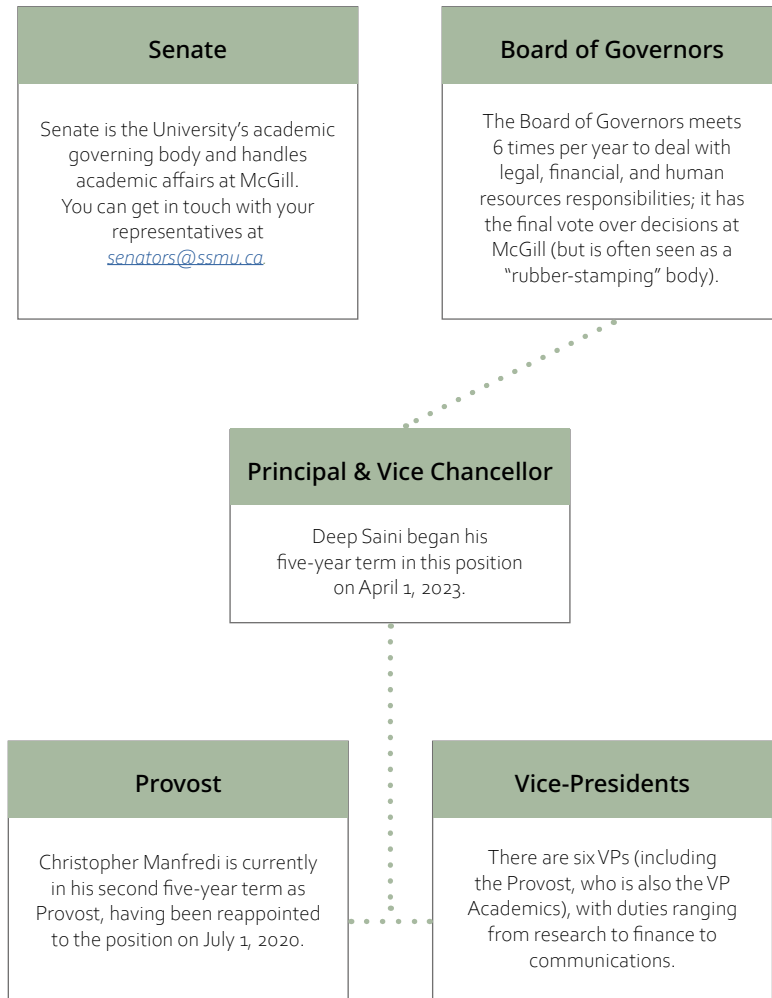


UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

McGill's administration is an incredibly complex bureaucracy, but you have student representatives that are tasked with bringing your concerns to the governing bodies of McGill.

Below are a few key bodies you need to know, as well as what kind of student representation.



ACADEMICS



Common name:
Choke Cherry
Scientific name:
Prunus virginiana
In-bloom: May–June



Scan this code for quick access to the links relevant to this section, organized by topic!

COURSE REGISTRATION

ADD/DROP

The add/drop period runs from the first day of class until **September 12** (and until **January 16** in the Winter semester). During this time, you can change your schedule as much as you like without worrying about penalties!

If you're looking to take a course S/U (i.e., pass/fail), be sure to do so by the Add/Drop deadline – see [page 166](#) for more.

During add/drop, instructors are not allowed to assign graded work without providing an alternative for students who join later in the add/drop period. If your instructor assigns work or tries to penalize students for missing work during this period, email the VP Academic of your department and faculty or SSMU VP University Affairs (ua@ssmu.ca).

WAITLISTS

Not all courses will have a waitlist. The “WL Rem” (Waitlist remaining) column on a course page in Minerva shows how much space is left on a given course's 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 you fail to do so, you will lose your place on the list).

You can check your status on the waitlist by going to “View Student Schedule by Course Section” within Minerva's Registration Menu.

U0 vs. U1

U1 students are those who have advanced standing (i.e., at least 24 course credits) from AP or IB classes, CEGEP, or 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.”

Students starting out with less than 24 credits are U0, and will have to complete their faculty's Freshman year program.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Sometimes you can't register for a class you need for one reason or another. Here are some steps to take if that happens:

Talk to an academic advisor about your options (see [page 166](#) for more on this)

→ Reach out to the professor to see if they can make room for you in the desired class

→ Sign up on seatalert.ca/mcgill to get email and text notifications when a spot opens up

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks and course-packs can get expensive and as a university student, you may be on a budget.

Below are some ways to save money on textbooks!

TIPS TO SAVE MONEY:

→ Check McGill's library

The Library usually has at least one copy of a course's textbook or digital coursepack, and students can request an addition to course reserves. It's a good idea to check the library's course reserves at bit.ly/3Ncas5a to see if your readings are in reserve!

→ Buy an earlier edition

Once a newer version of a textbook is released, the older ones get a lot cheaper. Make sure to check in with your professor, as older editions may no longer have up-to-date information!

→ Buy your textbooks secondhand

LE JAMES will occasionally have a very limited number of used textbooks, as the supply of used books has been greatly diminished since the pandemic.

→ Rent/buy your textbooks from Amazon

They will sometimes be cheaper than LE JAMES. Students who have a valid university email address can join Amazon Prime Student, which has additional deals.

→ Look for an Open Educational Resource (OER)

OERs are free, online, and frequently peer-reviewed academic resources. Check out openstax.org, bccampus.ca, the McGill Library, or the SSMU OER webpage (bit.ly/3aY4rJK) 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.

→ Share a textbook

If you have a study buddy who is taking the same course as you, you can consider splitting the cost of a textbook. If you choose this option, think about whether it will be practical for you before purchasing.

LIBRARIES

Montreal has many different types of places to go study, including cafes and parks, but nothing compares to 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/branches to make sure your spot will be open when you want to study!

MCLENNAN-REDPATH LIBRARY COMPLEX

3459 Rue McTavish

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.

* *Note:* McGill plans on renovating the McLennan-Redpath Complex, so most of its collection will be moved elsewhere. Construction is anticipated to start in mid 2024, during which time the library will be fully closed, and take an estimated three years to complete.

BLACKADER-LAUTERMAN LIBRARY

Redpath Library, floor 3
3459 Rue McTavish

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

Schulich Library is popular due to its 24/7 accessibility.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTRE

Burnside Hall, floor 5
805 rue Sherbrooke Ouest

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.

MARVIN DUCHOW MUSIC LIBRARY

Elizabeth Wirth Music Building, 3-5, entrance on 3rd floor
527 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest

This ultra-modern, sun-filled library is renowned for its easy access to the RVC Cafeteria, Vinh's Too Vietnamese Restaurant, and Starbucks. All students can come here, not just music students, and they have lots of resources available, including pianos, audio equipment, LPs and turntables, and audio editing software. Students should note that those in the faculty of Music are given priority in this space.

NAHUM GELBER LAW LIBRARY

3660 Rue Peel, floors 2-5

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. This area is usually filled with law and other graduate students and this may inspire you to get your work done. The view of Mount Royal is unbeatable as well!

BIRKS READING ROOM

William and Henry Birks Building, floor 2
3520 Rue University

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 from the past as it is a cozy reading room with many shelves full of antiquated books.

ISLAMIC STUDIES LIBRARY

3485 rue McTavish

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. The library works in conjunction with the Institute of Islamic Studies to highlight and illustrate the scale of Islamic civilization.

ONLINE ACADEMIC RESOURCES

The library website is a great place to access information and resources that can aid you in research, help you navigate the library system, and provide you with access to countless materials ranging across all subject areas. However, the massive number of links can be a bit overwhelming and some students aren't aware of everything that is available to them.

Here are some of the key resources offered on the library website.

WORKSHOPS

bit.ly/3MMGBj5

McGill's libraries offer many informative and skill-building workshops. Check out the website to see the schedule! .

Students might be particularly interested in research skills workshops (bit.ly/3PKxxfw).

RESEARCH MATERIALS

The library has lots of resources to help you with any research that you are conducting at McGill.

Subject Guides

libraryguides.mcgill.ca

The library offers extensive guides for researching specific subjects, including information about different types of resources and where to access them.

They are compiled by resource librarians with specific knowledge in the subject areas to ensure that the information is accurate and helpful. To find a guide, search for your subject at the link above or browse through the list of options. You can also reach out to subject liaison librarians (bit.ly/3aLQleg), who are knowledgeable about specific areas and available research materials.

Newspapers

bit.ly/3MJSJR4

McGill students have access to a number of newspapers across different time periods and locations.

Databases

bit.ly/3PBI6BP

McGill students have access to over 1500 databases across a wide array of subject areas. Consult the above link and filter by subject area or use the keyword search to find one that works for you!

Inter-Library Loan

bit.ly/38PWlgi

Want a book or other material that you can't find in McGill's collection? Luckily, McGill's partnership with libraries worldwide means you can have materials sent in from other libraries! For more information on making a request, click the link above.

Article/Chapter Scan

bit.ly/3MQgg2W

Do you need a digital copy of a material that the library only has in print? McGill students can request an article or chapter scan at the above link to be delivered to their McGill email address. Delivery time is typically 2 to 4 business days, but make sure to submit your request well ahead of your deadline in case of delays.

ROOM BOOKING

bit.ly/3PFDTwR

Library study rooms are a great place to hold a study or tutoring session, work on a group project, or ensure that your group has a quiet place to work during finals season. Students can book study rooms for 2 hours at a time and up to 4 hours per week.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR PROFS

As a first-year student, you will likely be in a number of large introductory-level courses. While being in a classroom with dozens or even hundreds of other students can be a bit overwhelming at first, there are still ways to forge relationships with your professors and teaching assistants (TAs).

Here are some tips to help you get started:

Don't be shy about asking questions.

Unless the professor states otherwise, lectures are a good time to raise your hand and get clarification on confusing course material! More likely than not, a few of your classmates will share the same question. Plus, asking questions demonstrates interest and effort on your part.

Consistently attend lectures and tutorials.

Many large classes also have weekly tutorials or conferences, where TAs review the week's material with a more manageable class size. Attending all your classes regularly will help you get to know your TA and vice-versa, making it easier to build a rapport with one another.

Show up to office hours.

Believe it or not, professors and TAs often end up idling their time during scheduled office hours. By showing up, you can get some one-on-one time with your instructor, and make a good impression on them. It helps to come up with a question or comment about the course content so you can have a meaningful conversation with your instructor.

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.

STUDY TIPS

- ✓ Utilize a day planner (like the one found in this handbook!)
- ✓ Go to a studying skills workshop
- ✓ Student Accessibility & Achievement, the Student Wellness Hub, and Campus Life & Engagement all offer these kinds of workshops throughout the year. Check out involvement.mcgill.ca to sign up for these workshops.
- ✓ Teaching and Learning Services also provides workshops on studying skills; check out www.mcgill.ca/tls/students/workshops for more info.
- ✓ Take a break from the library; try a cafe or park to get a breath of fresh air.
- ✓ Don't 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 should be your #1 priority – it's also crucial so you can stay focused while studying!
- ✓ Talk to your professor and TA during Office Hours. For more on how to build relationships with instructors, see page 161.

PLANNING FOR EXAMS

Make sure to plan for your exams ahead of time so you don't have to cram. Typically, McGill releases a tentative exam schedule in October for the Fall semester, and February for the Winter semester.

Do not make travel plans until the final version of the exam schedule is released, as dates may change and deferrals will not be granted for traveling students.

DEFERRING AN EXAM

If you fall ill or have a personal emergency, you may defer your exam. This means that you will still have to take your exam at a later date.

→ **To defer an exam:** submit a request according to your Faculty Guidelines. Many Faculties do not require supporting documentation if you are requesting a deferral for the first time – check bit.ly/43lqZVr to see if you qualify. Otherwise, you must cite a valid reason for requesting a deferred exam; these reasons include illness, serious personal issues, or serious extenuating circumstances (travel plans are not a valid reason). For incidental illness or flare-ups of chronic medical issues, you must provide medical documentation.

→ **Consequences of deferring an exam:** A deferred final exam will be noted with an "L" on your transcript alongside your final grade for the course. Once you defer an exam, any subsequent deferral requests will be analyzed more stringently, so they may be less likely to be approved. Additionally, you cannot defer an exam more than once; if you fall ill before taking your deferred exam, contact an academic advisor. Repeat exam deferral requests due to incidental illness are less likely to be approved.

* Additionally, deferred exams usually take place two or three months after the initial exam; it may be more difficult to pass the exam long after your course has ended. Student Accessibility & Achievement can help you address your accommodation needs if chronic medical issues make it difficult to manage exam schedules.

REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

→ Students registered with Student Accessibility & Achievement must submit accommodation requests a minimum of 14 days (including weekends) prior to the start of the quiz/test/exam.

→ Use your account on ClockWork to book academic accommodations. Once you sign up, the location of your exam will be sent to your McGill email address one day before the date of your exam; you will take the exam separately from your classmates to allow for extra time and other accommodations according to your needs.

→ If you do not submit your request on time, you may use the Student Accessibility & Achievement Late Request Form to ask for accommodations on short notice. However, late requests are only considered if 1) you are newly registered with Student Accessibility & Achievement, in which case a 7-day notice is still required, or 2) your instructor changed or announced an exam date within the 14-day deadline, in which case instructor verification will be required for approval.

* *Accommodations cannot be guaranteed for submissions received after the exam sign-up deadline, so be prepared to take the exam alongside your classmates, whether that be in-person or online.*

GRADING

Your Grade Point Average (GPA) for each term, as well as your GPA for your whole academic career (CGPA), 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

TERM	DEFINITION
CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE (CGPA)	This is the GPA for your entire degree at McGill – it includes every class you’ve taken so far.
SATISFACTORY/ UNSATISFACTORY (S/U)	Opting to take a course S/U means a course will not count toward your GPA — you either pass or fail the course. There are strict rules for taking a S/U course (e.g. you can only do it for electives and can only do it for a certain number of courses), so it’s recommended you speak to an advisor before choosing to take one. You must declare the S/U option by the end of Add/Drop – see page 156 .
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 be placed in Unsatisfactory Standing and must request readmission to your program. Contact your advisor if you are in this situation.
K	“Incomplete” – this may occur if you received an extension for a final assignment. If you are struggling to complete your coursework and think you need extra time – especially due to medical issues – contact your academic 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. It will not affect your GPA.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Nearly every McGill student has a story about sleeping through an exam, forgetting a big assignment, or just generally having a bad semester.

If this happens to you, take a deep breath and remind yourself that it’ll all be okay – then, follow some of these steps to remedy the situation.

CONTACT YOUR INSTRUCTOR.

Email your professor/TA, or show up to their office hours and explain what happened. Be honest, polite, and ask what you can do to fix the situation. More often than not, instructors are very understanding and will work with you to determine next steps.

CONTACT THE DEAN OF STUDENTS.

If you are facing problems that are outside of your control – such as discrimination, or an instructor who is violating your academic rights – get in touch with the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@mcgill.ca and make an appointment. Include your student ID number and the details of your issue in your email.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WELLNESS ADVISOR.

LWAs are embedded within each faculty at McGill, so they are equipped to handle school-related stress or time management issues. When you make an appointment with an LWA, they can help you find other mental health resources and put you in touch with the right person to address your needs. For more information on LWAs and other mental health resources, see [page 174](#).

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advisors can help you plan your schedule, register for classes, and direct you to opportunities related to your degree. They're usually in high demand at the beginning of the semester, so schedule an appointment in advance! Below is some information on different types of advisors.

For a full directory, visit: bit.ly/3yUloIP

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.

FACULTY ADVISORS

Where: The Student Affairs Office of your faculty

What they can do:

- 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 ahead of time.

What they can do:

- 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

Where: Reach out via email or go to office hours!

What they can do:

- Although they aren't official advisors, professors can help with your specific field of interest.
- 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.

TUTORING / MENTORING

Below are some peer- and university-run tutoring services.

For a full list, see bit.ly/3OhZTj6?r=q

MCGILL TUTORIAL SERVICE

What: A service that matches students with a tutor for whichever class they're struggling in. Any student enrolled at McGill may sign up.

Cost: \$18/hour for undergraduate tutors, \$22/hour for graduate tutors. Check the Student Accessibility & Achievement website to see if you qualify for subsidized tutoring: bit.ly/3MgRb24

ENGINEERING PEER TUTORING

epts.mcgilleus.ca/ | epts@mcgilleus.ca

What: Upper-level undergraduate tutors from all departments have weekly drop-ins where Uo/U1 students can get help with coursework. Tutors also offer final review sessions for undergraduate students of all years.

Cost: Free

SUS TUTORING SERVICE

susmcgill.ca/peer-tutoring | suspeertutors@gmail.com

What: The Science Undergraduate Society provides one-on-one tutoring, group tutorials, help desks, and review sessions from qualified student volunteers.

Cost: Free

AUS ESSAY CENTRE

What: Tutors who provide remote editing assistance (in French or English), or who can meet you via Zoom to discuss your essay for an Arts class.

Cost: Free