



# Welcome to the Faculty of Science!

## Science Office for Undergraduate Student Advising (SOUSA)

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## Getting a good start in your first year

Welcome to McGill! Now that you have had a chance to settle in, the SOUSA advising team would like to help you begin your McGill career successfully. We have prepared this pamphlet to help you organize your priorities as you begin your university studies. Use the “Important Dates” listing and the to-do lists that apply to you to plan your year so that you know what to do and when to do it. Read through the “Advising FAQs” to learn how to resolve common issues. Consult the “Other Resources” section to get an idea of all of the services that are available to you on campus.

The SOUSA advising team wishes you the very best for your first year at McGill – we encourage you to take advantage of our advising services and hope to meet you soon!

## SOUSA Advising

The SOUSA office provides academic advice to undergraduate students in the B.Sc. and B.A. & Sc. programs. SOUSA (faculty level) Advisors are experts in the regulations and requirements pertaining to specific degree programs. They are available throughout the academic year to help you plan your studies, and can provide advice about program selection, course registration, credit load, and deadlines. If you experience any academic, personal, financial, or medical difficulties during your studies, your SOUSA advisor can help you explore possibilities and strategies for managing your academic situation. All advising sessions are confidential and free.

To make the most of your time at McGill, keep in mind that your active participation in the advising process is essential. You must be proactive about seeking meetings with various advisors, professors, and counselors to ensure that you receive the advice you need to plan your studies and meet your

academic goals. Your SOUSA advisor is happy to give you guidance, but it is **ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you have met your degree requirements.**

## Who is your SOUSA advisor?

You can find the name of your assigned advisor under the Personal Information section of your unofficial Minerva transcript. In Minerva, select the “Student” tab on the top menu → select the “Student Records Menu” → select the “view your unofficial transcript” option. To meet with your SOUSA advisor, send him or her an email or come to Dawson Hall for drop-in advising. Advisor availability and contact information is available at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student).

### TO-DO LIST: START OF TERM

- ☐ Activate your McGill email - since all important correspondence from McGill will be sent to your McGill email address, you should activate this account right away.
- ☐ Confirm whether or not you will be granted credit and course exemption for any coursework that you have completed elsewhere. Refer to the “Advising FAQs” section of this pamphlet for more details about advanced standing.
- ☐ Complete your course registration. Keep in mind that you must register for courses for both the fall and winter terms.
- ☐ Verify your course and program selection on your Minerva unofficial transcript. In Minerva, select the “Student” tab on the top menu → select the “Student Records Menu” → select the “view your unofficial transcript” option.
- ☐ Review your course schedule on Minerva to determine the locations of your courses. You can find the buildings where your courses will be held on the campus map: [www.mcgill.ca/maps](http://www.mcgill.ca/maps).
- ☐ **September 4 – First day of lectures.** (Before Labour Day!) Make sure you have signed up for at least one course by **August 14, 2015** to avoid late registration fees. *Note that we will be running a MONDAY schedule on September 4, even though it is a Friday!*
- ☐ Review your course syllabi before the end of the add/drop period to help plan your semester and determine what is expected of you in each course. If you notice that two of your midterms are scheduled at the same time, speak to your professors right away to make necessary arrangements – do not wait until the last minute to resolve exam conflicts! (Not all courses list midterms in the schedule.)

## Important Dates

Official site for Important Dates: <http://www.mcgill.ca/importantdates/>

### **Fall 2015**

- August 14 – Last day for new students to register for at least one course without late fee.
- September 4 – First day of lectures (*Monday class schedule!*)
- September 22 – Course Change (add/drop) deadline for Fall term
- September 29 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **with** fee refund
- November 3 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **WITHOUT** fee refund
- December 7 – Last day of lectures for the Fall term
- December 9 - 22 – Final exam period. Midway through the term, the final exam schedule will be posted here:  
([www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/)).

### **Winter 2016**

- January 7 – First day of classes for the Winter term (*Monday class schedule!*)
- January 19 – Course Change (add/drop) deadline for Winter term
- January 26 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **with** fee refund
- February 29 - March 4 – Study Week
- March 8 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **WITHOUT** fee refund
- April 15 – Last day of lectures for the Winter term
- April 18 - 29 – Final exam period for the Winter term.

## To-do List: U0 Students

If you have been admitted into the B.Sc. or B.A. & Sc. Freshman (4 year) program, you should do the following:

### Information for B.Sc. and B.A. & Sc. Students

- ☐ Attend “Discover McGill” Orientation day on **September 1, 2015**.
- ☐ Keep an eye out for emails from your assigned SOUSA advisor, as he or she will be communicating with you throughout your first year.
- ☐ If you are already thinking about your options for next year, do some research. Although your assigned SOUSA advisor will be your main advising contact during your first year, you may still speak to program advisors to learn more about the programs that interest you. Contact information for program advisors is available in the “Other Resources” section of this pamphlet.

### Information specific to B.Sc. U0 Students

- ☐ Review the general advising and course information at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0).

- ☐ Read the sections of the undergraduate programs calendar pertaining to your degree requirements,  
[www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/science/undergraduate/ug\\_sci\\_faculty\\_degree\\_reqs](http://www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/science/undergraduate/ug_sci_faculty_degree_reqs)
- ☐ Attend a “Freshman Program Information session” on Wednesday, Sept 1. See [www.mcgill.ca/science/student](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student) for times and locations.

#### Information specific to B.A. & Sc. U0 Students

- ☐ Review the general advising and course information at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman).
- ☐ Read the sections of the undergraduate programs calendar pertaining to your degree requirements, [www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug\\_basc\\_degree\\_req](http://www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug_basc_degree_req)
- ☐ Attend the “Freshman Program Information session” on Wednesday, Sept 1. See [www.mcgill.ca/science/student](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student) for time and location.

### **To-do List: U1 Students**

If you have been admitted into a B.Sc. or B.A. & Sc. (3 year) program, you should be aware of the following:

*Unless you were admitted from a CEGEP Science DEC, **you may have to complete some missing Freshman Science requirements, even if you are in U1.** This includes applicants from the IB, French Bacc (from outside Quebec), and students with AP credits, A-levels, or transfers from other schools. Contact SOUSA to verify your freshman program status.*

#### Information for B.Sc. and B.A. & Sc. Students

- ☐ Attend CSI (CEGEP Student Information) if you were admitted from CEGEP and are in Montreal **Thursday, June 4**. It is *really* helpful to attend this event, but if you cannot, don't worry. See <http://www.mcgill.ca/firstyear/undergrad-students/csi-mcgill> for the day's schedule.
- ☐ Attend “Discover McGill” Orientation day on **September 1, 2015**.
- ☐ Attend orientation sessions for the department(s) offering the majors you intend to complete. See [www.mcgill.ca/science/student](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student) for times and locations (late August and early September).
- ☐ Meet with your program advisor to ensure that you are properly registered.
- ☐ Be aware of the advising support that is available to you throughout the year:
- ☐ Program advisors are responsible for students who are required to complete 96 or fewer credits. Consult your program advisor when you have specific questions about the requirements of their Honours, Major, B.Sc. Liberal, and Minor programs. Contact information for program advisors is available in the “Other Resources” section of this pamphlet.
- ☐ Your assigned SOUSA advisor can help you with the more general aspects of planning your B.Sc. degree. Keep an eye out for emails from your SOUSA advisor, as he or she will be communicating with you throughout your first year. His or her name will appear on your Minerva transcript just below your name sometime in the summer.



Information specific to B.Sc. U1 Students:

- ☐ Review the information about program requirements at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1)
- ☐ Read the sections of the undergraduate programs calendar pertaining to your degree requirements, [www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/science/undergraduate/ug\\_sci\\_faculty\\_degree\\_reqs](http://www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/science/undergraduate/ug_sci_faculty_degree_reqs)

Information specific to B.A. & Sc. U1 Students:

- ☐ Review the information about program requirements at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1)
- ☐ Read the sections of the undergraduate programs calendar pertaining to your degree requirements, [www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug\\_basc\\_degree\\_req](http://www.mcgill.ca/study/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug_basc_degree_req)
- ☐ Be aware that you MUST take BASC 201, the required integrative course. You should take it in your U1 year.

## To-do List: Special, Visiting, and Exchange Students

- ☐ Attend “Discover McGill” Orientation day on **September 1, 2015**.
- ☐ Review the general advising and course information for newly admitted special, visiting, and exchange students at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/special](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/special).
- ☐ Attend an Exchange Office Information Session.
- ☐ Your SOUSA advisor as well as your program advisor will be available to answer any academic questions about your first year at McGill.
- ☐ Be aware of the advising support that is available to you throughout the year:
- ☐ Program advisors can help answer your questions about course selection. Contact information for program advisors is available in the “Other Resources” section of this pamphlet.
- ☐ Your assigned SOUSA advisor will be your resource person during your time at McGill. Keep an eye out for emails from your SOUSA advisor, as he or she will be communicating with you throughout the school year.

## Advising FAQs

### ***I still need advice about course selection. Which advisor should I meet and how do I contact them?***

To determine whether you should see a program advisor or your SOUSA faculty advisor, read your **program-specific checklist** in this pamphlet. The SOUSA advisors’ contact information can be found on the first page of this pamphlet. For departmental advisors’ contact information, refer to the “Other Resources” section on the back cover of this pamphlet.

**What is the difference between required, complementary, and elective courses?**

**Required courses** must be taken to complete specific program requirements.

**Complementary courses** also count towards your program requirements; however, you do not have to take all of the complementary courses listed for a specific program. Instead, you must choose a specific number of credits from a list of complementary courses in order to complete program requirements.

**Elective courses** are the courses that you take outside of your selected program or programs, in order to reach the 120 credits necessary for obtaining your degree.

***I expect to receive advanced standing for some previously completed coursework. What should I do to ensure that I am properly registered?***

Any advanced standing that you receive will be listed on your unofficial transcript on Minerva. Keep in mind that you will not receive additional credit towards your degree for any McGill course whose content overlaps substantially with any other course for which you have already received credit. (In other words, if you take a course at McGill for which you have already been granted credit and exemption, you will not receive any credit for it.)

If you have completed International Baccalaureate, French Baccalaureate, Advanced Levels, Advanced Placement tests, or the CEGEP DEC, refer to the following websites:

[www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective) (advanced standing) AND  
[www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/science/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/science/) (placement exams).

If you have completed university work elsewhere, it is best to meet with your program advisor to determine whether you are eligible for any transfer credit or exemptions from departmental requirements. Be certain to bring descriptions of the courses you took and a copy of your university transcript to this advising appointment.

\*Attention CEGEP students: If you took Organic Chemistry in CEGEP, please verify whether or not you should receive any exemption from this course at [www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/cegep/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/cegep/). If you have any questions, please contact your SOUSA advisor.

***What is a placement exam?***

Students entering McGill who feel that they've completed the equivalent of one or more university-level mathematics or science courses, but do not have acceptable certification to that effect, may earn exemptions from one or more of the basic science courses by taking admission placement examinations before starting classes. These are formal exams held on the McGill campus. For more information, please go to [www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/science/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/science/).

### ***Can I take a course under the S/U Option?***

If you would like to take a course outside of your area of specialization without worrying about whether that course will decrease your GPA, the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) option may be a good option for you. Courses taken under this option will receive final grades of “S” or “U,” and these final grades are not included in GPA calculations and do not count towards your major or minor requirements. They count only as elective credit. To choose this option for a course, go to the Course Add/Drop menu on Minerva and change the “course grade mode.”

However, keep the following rules in mind when you are considering the S/U option:

- UO students cannot use the S/U option.
- Do NOT use the S/U option on courses that count towards your program requirements.
- You may only take one elective course per term under the S/U option, and you may only use the S/U option for 10% of your total **McGill** credits (i.e. the number of credits you must complete *at McGill* in order to obtain your degree).

### ***I am having trouble registering for a course. What can I do?***

If the course is full and it is a required course for your program, you must contact the department administering the course to determine whether or not they can increase the course's capacity. If not, spaces often open in courses during the add/drop period, so if you really want to get into a course, just keep checking on Minerva to see if any seats have opened.

For more details about course registration problems, including explanations of Minerva error messages such as “Reserve Closed,” refer to our “Tips on handling registration problems” at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/general/registration/tipsheet/](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/general/registration/tipsheet/).

### ***I am on the waitlist for a course. What should I do?***

If you are on the waitlist for a course, do NOT drop the course if you see that places have become available in that course. If you do this, you will lose your place on the waitlist. Any seats



that do open in waitlisted courses will be filled by students who are next on the waitlist. When it is your turn to register for the course, you will receive an email (at your McGill address) telling you how much time you have to register. It is during this time that places will appear to be open in the course, when in reality no one else will be allowed to register for these open seats. For more information about waitlists, visit: [www.mcgill.ca/students/courses/add/waitlisting/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/courses/add/waitlisting/).

***Can I register for an elective course in other faculties, such as Management, Music or Engineering for example?***

**B.Sc. students** are normally allowed to take a maximum of **18 credits outside** of the faculties of Arts and of Science. However, only certain courses are acceptable for credit towards your B.Sc. To make sure that the course you wish to take is acceptable for credit, see “Restricted Courses outside the Faculty of Science” at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/continuingstudents/bsc/outside](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/continuingstudents/bsc/outside).

**B.A. & Sc. students** are allowed a maximum of **12 credits outside** of the Faculties of Arts and of Science. There are some restrictions on the type of courses you can take. See the SOUSA website for details at [www.mcgill.ca/science/student/continuingstudents/basc/conted](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/continuingstudents/basc/conted).

***How can I find out my final exam schedule?***

The final exam schedule is posted online about halfway through the semester at [www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/). **If you need to book a flight home for the holidays, know that travel plans do not constitute an exam conflict.** You should either wait until the final exam schedule is available before making travel plans, or you should schedule your travel plans for the day after final exams end (the dates of the final exam period are listed in the “Important Dates” section of this pamphlet).

***I have several consecutive final exams scheduled. Does this count as an exam conflict?***

Information about exam conflicts, including the steps to take if you have an exam conflict, is available at [www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/conflicts](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/conflicts).

***Do I have to finish my degree in a set amount of time?***

If you are a full-time U1 student, you are expected to complete your degree in no more than eight terms after your initial registration. If you are a full-time student currently in the Freshman Program, you will be subject to this rule one year after your initial registration. If you are

registered for part-time studies (taking less than 12 credits per term) this time limit does not apply.

However, regardless of full-time or part-time status, you are expected to complete your degree within 120 credits\* (\*See below for exceptions). Any elective courses taken after you reach **120 credits will be E-flagged**, which means that they will not count for credit and will be excluded from your GPA. If you need to exceed the time and/or credit limit for completing your degree, you must appeal to the Director of Advising Services, Faculty of Science.

#### **Exceptions to the 120 credit limit rule:**

[www.mcgill.ca/study/university\\_regulations\\_and\\_resources/undergraduate/ug\\_gi\\_advanced\\_standing\\_transfer\\_credits](http://www.mcgill.ca/study/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/ug_gi_advanced_standing_transfer_credits)

Students who have successfully completed their high school studies, including courses or programs that may result in the awarding of advanced standing and exemptions, such as the International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement examinations, GCE A-Levels, French Baccalaureate, and other qualifications, must declare these studies upon applying for admission to McGill University. Advanced standing and exemptions will be given for these completed studies.

Students who have been granted advanced standing for the International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement examinations, GCE A-Levels, French Baccalaureate, and other qualifications, but who wish to complete a four-year undergraduate program at McGill, will be permitted to do so, with the appropriate limitations on the repetition of courses for which they have received exemptions. This gives students with advanced standing the option of completing 120 credits post-admission to McGill (including credits taken as part of an exchange or study away while enrolled at McGill). Interested students should contact their SOUSA adviser.

Note that this does not apply to CEGEP students, or transfer students from another university. Those students are still subject to the 120 credit limit.

## Other Resources

### Program Advisors:

Contact information for all Science and Arts departments is available at

[www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1/adviser/](http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1/adviser/) (**Science**)

AND [www.mcgill.ca/oasis/resources/departmental-academic-advisers](http://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/resources/departmental-academic-advisers) (**Arts**).

## Service Point:

Service Point provides the following services for students:

- assistance with course and program registration for Arts and Science students
- information about exams, and approval of requests for supplemental and deferred exams for Arts or Science students
- ranking/recommendation letters for Arts and Science students
- proof of enrolment letters
- certified or translated copies of diplomas
- help with admissions
- help with Minerva
- international health insurance card and exemptions
- McGill ID cards
- official transcript pick-up, replacement diplomas
- student study-abroad exchange programs
- help with submission of legal documents
- tuition and fees information
- US student loans pick-up

For more information and online service options, visit [www.mcgill.ca/students/servicepoint/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/servicepoint/)

## Student Services:

McGill offers a full range of student services – everything from counselling to career planning! To learn more about the services available, visit [www.mcgill.ca/studentsservices](http://www.mcgill.ca/studentsservices).

## The Undergraduate Programs, Courses and University Regulations Online Calendar:

The online calendar includes everything from program information to all university rules and regulations. As a McGill student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the information outlined in this document, which is available at [www.mcgill.ca/study](http://www.mcgill.ca/study).