

## Special COVID-19 Faculty Council & Town Hall Meeting March 31, 2020

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Learners (General)

##### **Are there sources of financial aid for students who are struggling?**

A: Yes. Please consult the [Scholarship and Student Aid website](#), including their [FAQs](#). Tuition deferral is a standard part of the University's needs-based student aid support. The University has also set up the [McGill Student Emergency Support Fund](#) to help build more student aid resources.

##### **Will tuition fees for graduate students be revised for those who now have to add another semester due to delays in research activities?**

A: This question has yet to be addressed; we will confirm as soon as we have information on this.

##### **Are there any programs to (remotely) pair students with others who might need help, such as the Buddy Program run by the Office of International Students?**

A: These would necessarily be planned at the local/departmental level, and we encourage students to contact their departments to see if anything is underway. For instance, we understand that the Post-Graduate Students' Society and certain Graduate Student Associations, including the Integrated Program in Neuroscience, are setting something up. As for an informal buddy program, students are encouraged to speak to program directors or departmental chairs, and then collaborate with other students.

##### **Given that McGill is offering flexible satisfactory/unsatisfactory options to students this semester, will the Faculty of Medicine's undergraduate and master's programs make adjustments to their academic requirements in future application cycles?**

A: A note regarding the extraordinary circumstances of this semester will be placed on the transcript of each student.

##### **Has this situation affected Fall 2020 admissions to undergraduate and graduate programs, including for international students?**

A: All program admissions committees are discussing how to assess future applications, taking into consideration the circumstances. The goal is that applicants not be disadvantaged in any way. For graduate students, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has an [FAQ](#) with deadlines and info on tracking is updated regularly. Our hope is to offer all programs this fall, whether via remote learning or otherwise.

#### Learners (Medicine)

##### **What block exam format is being considered for Med 1 students?**

A: INDS 116 exam format was approved. When preparing for the other remaining courses, we will also review the exam format for these courses. More details about INDS 116 exam can be found in the April 2 e-digest.

**What is the examination format for Med 2 written exams and should we buy/get material (as in technological devices) in anticipation?**

A: We are looking at procedures now and hope to confirm soon.

**What is the status of our scheduled away electives at other schools?**

A: All schools are affected and we are meeting on a regular basis with counterparts in Quebec and Canada to review.

**Will more elective spots be created at McGill to accommodate Med3 students?**

A: It is too soon to know how clerkship will resume at this time, including the impact on electives. We are looking into different avenues.

**In terms of electives planning, is it safe to assume that we will be returning to our core electives and therefore will not have any electives in July?**

A: Students will need to complete remaining year 3 compulsory courses prior to moving to year 4 courses (which include an elective for some students). How this will be translated into the clerkship schedule is under review. It is also too soon to know when clerkship will resume and therefore too early to plan for period 1 at this time.

**For students about to go into clinical practice (Med 4s), will the remaining online curriculum be reoriented to prepare us to deal with the current situation?**

A: The expectations of the program remain the same. Based on your feedback, we are looking into the possibilities of adding some COVID-19 infection-related learning opportunities.

--

Please visit [UGME's COVID-19 website](#) for regular updates.

## **Learners (Residents)**

**Is there any chance that residency may begin earlier, or later, than July 1 for incoming residents?**

A: The current plan is to begin on July 1, but some challenges remain. Residencies in the clinical environment are ongoing.

**Are IMG fellows included in these regulations?**

A: IMG fellows are considered like any other fellow and, if they have the appropriate skills, will be redeployed.

**Will clinical fellows continue to have a graduation date of June 30? Those from outside of Canada would have difficulties to extend considering issues regarding visa, lodging etc.**

A: Our goal is to ensure trainees scheduled to graduate on June 30 finish on time. We are exploring various methods to achieve this goal. Visa extensions will not be an issue, as we have pre-established mechanisms to allow for extensions of training when necessary.

**R5s across Canada are very concerned about the Royal College examination being delayed. Are there any efforts done to have the possibility to write it earlier, before July 1?**

All Faculties of Medicine in Canada are working collaboratively with the RCPSC, national licensing authorities and learner organizations to explore the best solutions to address the challenges related to the delays in administration of the certification examinations. The primary goal is to assure the safety of the residents, and to meet the needs of the health care system during this global pandemic.

--

Please visit [PGME's COVID-19 website](#) for regular updates.

### **Learners (Nursing)**

**For nursing students about to go into clinical practice, are we going to reorient our remaining online curriculum to specifically address the problem at hand?**

A: The Ingram School of Nursing is incorporating relevant material regarding the pandemic into our current and future courses.

--

For more information, please visit the Ingram School of Nursing's [COVID-19 page](#).

### **Learners (School of Communications Sciences and Disorders)**

**For students going into final clinical placements (SLPs), is there a possibility they could be changed to paid final internships (Quebec and outside of QC) to help students financially during this time?**

We are not aware of any provincial government initiatives that address the particular financial vulnerability of our speech-language pathology students who will not complete their final internships this summer and, therefore will be unable to progress to paid employment in September as anticipated. There are other groups of students in this situation (articling students in Law, student teachers in Education, students in other health and social services professions). Federal government programs are currently directed at individuals who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19, and not at individuals who will not be able to take up new jobs due to COVID-19. The students' internships (when they occur, most likely 4 months late, in the fall) are planned to take place throughout Canada; it is impossible to predict whether any of the provinces will put in place strategies to mitigate the financial losses for these students. Paying the students during their internships is just one of several possible strategies, but we have not heard that any province is considering this mechanism as of yet. Should we learn more, we will update you as soon as feasible.

--

For more information, please visit SCSD's [COVID-19 page](#).

## **Learners (Physical and Occupational Therapy)**

*For COVID-19 information related to SPOT, please visit the website [here](#).*

## **Learners (Graduate, Research Trainees)**

### **What should we do if we are getting opposing information about guidelines from the Faculty of Medicine and CIUSS for research based at hospitals?**

A: For students getting mixed messages from hospital research institutes and the university, we encourage you to abide by the university's guidelines. If you encounter problems or resistance from your supervisor, please contact [Aimee Ryan](#), Associate Dean (Biomedical BSc, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs), or [Shari Baum](#), Vice Dean, Life Sciences.

### **Is there any way of knowing when students working on research projects in labs will be able to return their work?**

A: Unfortunately nobody knows at this point. Once the total number of cases is low enough that the healthcare system can handle it, life will begin to go back to normal. The next two weeks will be critical in understanding where we are going.

### **For students who are currently in their final data collection phase and who have had to stop all experiments, will committees and evaluators be asked to be more flexible with graduation requirements such as theses, defenses, etc.?**

A: As we are all going through this together, the hope is everyone will be reasonable. Those working towards an April deadline are probably in the final phases, and we don't expect major impacts on thesis submission. However, those whose deadline is in August may still need to finish their final experiments. Once we know the schedule for return to experiments, students should meet their supervisors to determine if these experiments are achievable and/or necessary. All PhD defenses are occurring on schedule using Zoom.

### **Will the application deadline for Faculty of Medicine internal McGill studentships/fellowships be extended?**

A: Yes, the deadline is being extended to April 30 – but no later as the point is to have funding in place by September 1.

### **What happens to master students who were supposed to graduate in August if our summer classes are cancelled? I am 2 credits short of graduating and I'm unsure how to complete those, especially since I start Med 1 in August under the premise of completing my degree.**

A. We and Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will work with students to find course substitutions. Contact [Aimee Ryan](#), Associate Dean (Biomedical BSc, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs). The current crisis will be taken into consideration.

### **What can we expect for fall 2020: is it going to be online or in person for graduate student of master's?**

A. It is too early to confirm.

**As a grad student in a research lab, I feel as though I have not been given much guidance on how this will impact our wet-lab research - we have been told to leave the lab and “ramp down experiments”; however, we have not been given any guidance on leaving the lab and how it will impact our degrees. The guidelines seem to be focused on course-based students who complete semester-based courses.**

The impact on individual graduate students will vary according to their experimental model and their timeline with respect to degree completion. We do not know what the "ramp-up" will look like or when we will have fully returned back to the labs. Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their supervisors, advisory committees and/or graduate program directors, or [Aimee Ryan](#), Associate Dean (Biomedical BSc, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs). Aimee Ryan will be hosting a ***Deadlines and Timelines during the COVID-19 Pandemic*** Zoom drop-In session for students to discuss concerns on **Tuesday April 7 at 2 p.m.**

**Are you aware of the student-led [Open Source Covid19 Medical Supplies](#) initiative? Is the Faculty urging researchers who have halted research activities to donate their stocks of unused Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), either through initiatives like this or directly to our partner hospitals?**

A: We have communicated with researchers in response to an urgent request for PPE from the Quebec government. We have received approx. 70 responses within 24 hours. We encourage everyone to register and post contributions to the new web portal: <https://covid19resources.ca>.

--

*For more FAQs specific to graduate students, please visit the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies [COVID-19 FAQs](#). Also relevant is the [Faculty's Research Office COVID-19 page](#).*

## **PIs, Scientists**

**Once the province gives the green light, do you envision starting lab work gradually, with shift work of small teams for defined periods of time in each lab?**

A: We don't yet know how things will restart. It will depend, in large part, on the status of the pandemic and government directives. Our current hypothesis is that we will continue to limit the number of individuals present in labs simultaneously, via shift work.

**Some funding organizations are stopping payments of studentships/fellowships. For example the Parkinson's Disease Foundation is closed so will not send the April 1 cheques to fellows. What should we do?**

A: Supervisors need to monitor these decisions, to make sure their students and postdocs continue to be paid.

**Are there any initiatives or support for investigators who can't access their labs or collect data?**

A: The Faculty's Academic Affairs Office is looking at ways to connect faculty members with faculty members, to provide extra mentorship or spark new collaborations that might allow productivity, despite the inability to collect data at the moment.

## **Clinician Teachers, incl. Residents**

**La Fédération des médecins spécialistes (FMSQ) has told us not to teach certain activities during this time. What should we do?**

A: Attached you will find the collective response to this FMSQ announcement from Quebec's four Faculties of Medicine collectively sent their official response to the FMSQ's message. The Faculties' response underscores the critical importance of supporting the educational mission to ensure our students and residents stay on track in their learning and training trajectories. This position supports the Quebec government's statements on this topic, as well.

\*\*

See [here for Key Takeaways](#) shared during the March 31 Special COVID-19 Faculty Council & Town Hall meeting.

***IMPORTANT:*** We have endeavoured to capture the majority of questions asked during the meeting; because the situation continues to evolve daily, information captured here may change; it is important you stay up-to-date by frequently consulting the sources available.

*Important Faculty and University sources of information:*

- [McGill Faculty of Medicine COVID-19 Updates](#), including links to schools' and unit updates.
- [McGill Coronavirus Updates](#), including University-wide [FAQs](#)

*Other:*

- [Santé Québec](#)
- [Info-Santé](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) – COVID-19 for Health Professionals](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)