

# Information for Potential Applicants

## PhD in Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences

Admission of new students to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences occurs twice per year, in September (Fall semester) and January (Winter semester).

### Program beginning in September 2023:

The application period begins October 3 of the preceding year. For Fall 2023 admissions, our **recently changed application deadlines** are as follows:

- |                          |                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January 15, 2023</b>  | for international applicants, excepting applicants registered in a full-time McGill program in Winter 2023;                          |
| <b>February 28, 2023</b> | for Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada, and for applicants registered in a full-time McGill program in Winter 2023. |

### Program beginning in January 2024:

Please contact us after March 15, 2023, for updated deadlines.

## General instructions and online information sessions

There are many steps to be completed before an application can be submitted. You will find helpful information here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/how-apply>.

When accessing our Slate admissions platform, **Google Chrome** will normally provide the best experience.

McGill University offers online workshops and pre-recorded information sessions to assist applicants, including sessions on:

- Writing a personal statement;
- How to contact potential supervisors;
- Using our new application system;
- The application process.

Please visit <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/events> to access these sessions.

## Virtual tour of McGill University

Visit <https://www.youvisit.com/tour/mcgill/> for a virtual tour of McGill University.

## Applying to our program – PhD in Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences

We do **\*not\*** require the GRE.

Applications are submitted through our Slate admissions platform, at <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply-now>. You will be asked to upload all your university-level transcripts, as well as a personal statement, and two referees will upload their letters of reference. A TOEFL score (or equivalent) may also be required; additional information is available here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/international/apply/proficiency>.

### Notes re. transcripts:

- All university-level institutions attended must be listed in the application, including institutions attended via study abroad/exchange programs (if applicable).
- All university-level transcripts must be uploaded. This includes transcripts from study abroad/exchange programs (if applicable).
- We accept unofficial transcripts during the initial application review. (We will request your official documents if you receive an offer of admission.)
- If not on the transcript, the grading scale must also be provided (usually found on the back of the transcript).
- For Fall 2023 admissions, normally we do **\*not\*** require grades from Winter 2023 or later during the initial application review. (We will request these grades if you receive an offer of admission.)
- Please ensure that you complete all the requirements listed here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/how-apply/submit-your-application/documents#transcripts>.

## Financial support – stipend and fee subsidy

### Stipend

Many of our students arrive without an external fellowship. In such cases our department provides a stipend of **CAD \$24,000 per year** (in Canadian dollars) in the years prior to PhD 6 to full-time students who maintain satisfactory standing in our PhD program. Some supervisors will provide this annual stipend until the end of the PhD 7 year.<sup>1</sup>

Please note that if a student is awarded an external scholarship or other financial support, the departmental contribution to the student's funding will be reduced. However, supervisors in our department offer a significant financial top-up to students who have received a major award.

---

<sup>1</sup> Very rarely, applicants hoping to secure funding from outside Canada may receive a **conditional offer of admission** to our PhD program; in such exceptional cases the student may not receive a stipend from our department. This information would be clearly stated in the letter of offer.

## Subsidy of international fees

In addition to the stipend, our department offers a **partial subsidy of international fees** up to and including the end of the PhD 4 year. At 2022–2023 rates, the value of this subsidy is approximately **CAD \$15,000 per year** (up to and including the PhD 4 year) for most international students admitted to our PhD program.

(From the PhD 5 year onwards, international students are no longer charged higher tuition fees than PhD students who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.)

This subsidy ensures that full-time international students who maintain satisfactory standing in our PhD program **pay:**

- **the same tuition fees and**
- **the same non-tuition fees charged by Student Accounts**

**as students who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada**, up to and including the end of the PhD 4 year.

## Additional non-guaranteed income: paid Teaching Assistant positions

McGill University offers paid Teaching Assistant (TA) positions with a salary of CAD \$33.03/hour (as of Aug. 1, 2022). Every year our department typically offers 40-50 TA positions of 45 hours each. All PhD 2 or higher students may apply for our department's TA positions.

In our department, students may earn employment income for up to 180 hours per semester without reduction to the stipend or fee subsidy. Typically, our PhD students above the PhD 1 year who apply to and are selected for one 45-hour TA position per semester, will earn CAD \$2,970 per year in addition to the full stipend (and full fee subsidy, if applicable).

## Evaluation of the applicant's dossier

The normal requirement for admission to the PhD program is a strong background in meteorology, physical oceanography, or related disciplines such as mathematics, physics, and engineering. Many students will have an MSc degree in one of these fields, although this is not a formal requirement. Students without a master's degree in atmospheric science (meteorology) or physical oceanography will enter at the PhD 1 rather than the PhD 2 level, and devote the first year of the program mainly to coursework.

### For applicants who have completed university-level studies outside Canada:

Please also consult McGill's web page on international credentials and grade equivalencies: <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/how-apply/application-steps/equivalency>.

PhD applicants cannot receive an offer of admission unless a department faculty member accepts to supervise the applicant. Most supervisors in our department look at the transcript to evaluate whether the student can excel in graduate-level courses and can perform quantitative research. Most supervisors generally care most about the quantitative background: math, physics, and upper-level physical science

courses. Strong grades in these courses are likely to be needed. Other positive attributes such as computer programming skills and/or strong letters of reference (from respected scientists) would also work in your favour.

If you would like to know what level of math is normally required, you can use our undergraduate major program as a guideline:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/study/2022-2023/faculties/science/undergraduate/programs/bachelor-science-bsc-major-atmospheric-science>.

Please note that admission to our programs is competitive; therefore, the available number of places for new PhD students is limited (but may vary from year to year). Typically, successful applicants to our PhD program have a CGPA ranging from 3.5/4.0 to 4.0/4.0, although in exceptional cases applicants with a CGPA in the range of 3.2-3.49/4.0 may also be successful. Admission is not guaranteed for applicants presenting at least the minimum CGPA. The evaluation of an application includes the careful review of reference letters, training in mathematics, prior research experience and future research potential, applicant interests, and all other admission requirements.

## Finding a supervisor

It is very strongly recommended that applicants to the PhD program contact potential supervisors. As mentioned above, PhD applicants cannot receive an offer of admission unless a department faculty member accepts to supervise the applicant. It is best to review our faculty members' research interests to determine which potential supervisors best match your interests and goals. You are welcome to send your CV to those potential supervisors, with a message explaining why you wish to work with the potential supervisor, and which aspects of their research match your interests. Our advice is to:

- 1- Explain why you are interested in their research (mention a specific paper they wrote that you read, or discuss one of their areas of interest; be specific; demonstrate that you have found and read information about their professional activities), and
- 2- Explain why your background is a good match for their research area or research group.

Information concerning our faculty members, with links to descriptions of their research interests, is available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/meteo/facultystaff/faculty-0>. (Choose the "Professors" tab, then click on a faculty member's name for a description of their research interests. See also the links to faculty members' websites.)

You can also search for potential supervisors by research area, by visiting our department's Research web pages at <https://www.mcgill.ca/meteo/aos-research>.

You may also be interested in McGill University's **online workshop/recorded information session** on securing a supervisor. For information, please visit <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/events>.

## Personal statement

The personal statement is an essay in which the applicant describes their reasons for applying to graduate studies, and indicating qualifications, qualities or circumstances the applicant feels to be significant; this document usually provides information about educational and professional goals.

One page is sufficient; two pages are also acceptable. You may want to explain some/all of the following in the personal statement:

- Why you are interested in the program;
- Which aspects of Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences are of most interest to you, and why;
- Which faculty members you would most wish to work with, and why;
- Why you are a strong candidate for the program.

You may also be interested in McGill University's **online workshop/recorded information session** on writing a personal statement. For information, please visit <https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/events>.

## Additional information

You can find additional information concerning the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences on the following web pages:

- [Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at McGill University – Graduate Programs](#)
- [Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at McGill University – Prospective Graduate Students](#)
- [McGill University eCalendar – PhD Program in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences](#)

Should you have questions, please contact Manuela Franzo, the Graduate Program Coordinator, at [graduateinfo.aos@mcgill.ca](mailto:graduateinfo.aos@mcgill.ca).