Welcome to the McGill B.A.&Sc!

Science Office for Undergraduate Student Advising (SOUSA)

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Getting a good start in your first year as a Bachelor of Arts & Science Student

Welcome to McGill! 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.A.&Sc and B.Sc. degrees. 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.

You also have access to program advisors, who are specialists in the requirements of their specific courses and programs. There is a program advisor for every major, honours, Interfaculty and minor program available in the B.A.&Sc. degree.
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 on 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; it is normally added to the transcript during the first week of July. 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.

Important Dates

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

**Fall 2017**
- August 14 – Last day for new students to register for at least one course without late fee.
- September 5 – First day of lectures
- September 19 – Course Change (add/drop) deadline for Fall term
- September 26 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **WITH** fee refund
- October 31 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **WITHOUT** fee refund
- December 7 – Last day of lectures for the Fall term (Monday class schedule!)
- December 8 - 21 – Final exam period. Midway through the term, the final exam schedule will be posted here: (www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/).

**Winter 2018**
- January 8 – First day of classes for the Winter term
- January 23 – Course Change (add/drop) deadline for Winter term
- January 30 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **WITH** fee refund
- March 5 - March 9 – Study Break
- March 13 – Deadline for withdrawal (grade of “W”) **WITHOUT** fee refund
- April 16 – Last day of lectures for the Winter term
- April 17 - 30 – Final exam period. Midway through the term, the final exam schedule will be posted here: (www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/).
Students admitted with a Quebec CEGEP Diploma

You need to complete 90 university credits for your B.A.&Sc. Your transcript indicates that you need 120 credits, however you have been granted 30 credits of advanced standing due to your CEGEP D.E.C.. So in fact, you have 90 remaining credits to complete. If you obtained a D.E.C. in Science or in Integrated Arts and Science, you are exempt from the freshman program, and may proceed directly into your major.

If you completed a D.E.C. in any other field (Technical, Social science, etc...) you may have some outstanding freshman science courses to complete. Please consult with your SOUSA advisor to determine if this is the case. Regardless of whether or not you have any outstanding freshman science courses to complete, you will also be declaring your major this year.

In addition to your major/honours/Interfaculty and minor programs, you must also complete BASC 201 Arts & Science Integrative Topics. This course integrates information from Arts & Science (e.g. biomedical ethics; history of science; scientific reasoning; military conflict and geography; philosophy of mind, etc.) to exemplify the benefits of applying scholarship from diverse areas to a problem. You are strongly encouraged to complete BASC 201 in your U1 year.

In addition to your SOUSA advisor, who will follow you throughout the next three years, you will also have a program advisor for each major/honour/Interfaculty and minor program you declare. Program advisors specialize in the requirements of the specific program, whereas your SOUSA advisor specializes in all other aspects of the Bachelor of Arts and Science degree. Your SOUSA advisor’s name can be found on your MINERVA unofficial transcript; it is normally added to the transcript during the first week of July. Contact information for program advisors is available in the “Other Resources” section of this pamphlet.

To-do List:

- Attend CSI (CEGEP Student Information) if you were admitted from CEGEP and are in Montreal Thursday, June 9, 2017. It is really helpful to attend this event, but if you cannot, don’t worry; just be sure to attend “Discover McGill” orientation day in August. See http://www.mcgill.ca/firstyear/undergrad-students/CSI-mcgill for the day’s schedule.
- 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 you will be granted course exemption for any CEGEP courses (Organic Chemistry 1 and/or 2; Calculus 3, Linear Algebra, Statistics). For details, consult http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/cegep.
- Review the information about program requirements in the Bachelor of Arts and Science section of the Undergraduate Programs E-Calendar at http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2017-2018/faculties/basc/undergraduate
- Read the sections of the undergraduate programs calendar pertaining to your degree requirements, http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2017-2018/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug_basc_degree_reqs
☐ Familiarize yourself with the SOUSA web page:  
http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1

☐ Complete your course registration. Keep in mind that you must register for courses for both the fall and winter terms. Don’t forget to register for BASC 201.

☐ 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.

☐ Attend “Discover McGill” Orientation day on **August 29, 2017**; this is especially important if you have not attended CSI in June.

☐ Attend orientation sessions for the department offering the Interfaculty program or science major or minor you intend to complete. See www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1/programorientation for times and locations (late August and early September).

☐ Attend the Arts Departmental Programs Fair on **August 30, 2017** for information on the Arts major or minor you intend to complete. See http://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/students/new select “U1 Departmental” tab.

☐ Meet with your program advisors to ensure that you are properly registered.

☐ **September 5, 2017 – First day of lectures.** Make sure you have signed up for at least one course by August 14, 2017 to avoid late registration fees.

☐ 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!

**Students admitted with a High School diploma, International Baccalaureate, French Baccalaureate, European Baccalaureate, A-levels, or other non-university educational backgrounds**

You need to complete 120 university credits for your B.A.&Sc. This normally requires 4 years of full-time study. You may have received advanced standing credits due to your previous education, to a maximum of 30 credits. To find out if this applies to you, and for more information on this, please consult:  
http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/

If you do not have any advanced standing, or if you have received between 3 and 23 credits of advanced standing, you are considered a freshman (U0) student; you will not declare your majors or Interfaculty program until next year. If you have received 24 to 30 advanced standing credits, you are considered a U1 student, and you must declare a major or interfaculty program this year.

Regardless of whether you are U0 or U1, you must complete the Arts and Science Freshman Program requirements. If you have advanced standing credits, these may contribute to the completion of some
or all of the Freshman Program requirements. In order to determine if you have any outstanding freshman program courses to complete, you must submit the online course approval form to SOUSA. You will find the form here: http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman/basc-course-approval-form. An advisor will review the form, and let you know if there are any outstanding freshman program requirements which you must complete. If you have any questions after you have submitted the form, please contact your SOUSA advisor for clarification.

In addition to your major/honours/Interfaculty and minor programs, you must also complete BASC 201 Arts & Science Integrative Topics. This course integrates information from Arts & Science (e.g. biomedical ethics; history of science; scientific reasoning; military conflict and geography; philosophy of mind, etc.) to exemplify the benefits of applying scholarship from diverse areas to a problem. You are strongly encouraged to complete BASC 201 in your U1 year.

In addition to your SOUSA advisor, who will follow you throughout the next four years, you will also have a program advisor for each major/honour/Interfaculty and minor program you declare. Program advisors specialize in the requirements of the specific program, whereas your SOUSA advisor specializes in all other aspects of the Bachelor of Arts and Science degree. Your SOUSA advisor’s name can be found on your MINERVA unofficial transcript; it is normally added to the transcript in the first week of July. Contact information for program advisors is available in the “Other Resources” section of this pamphlet.

To-do List:

- Complete and submit the online course approval form as early as possible. You will find this form at http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman/basc-course-approval-form
- 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. For details, consult http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/.
- Review the B.A.&Sc. Freshman Program Requirements at: http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman/requirements and if you have received advanced standing credits, establish whether you have been exempted from any of these requirements. Make sure you register for all outstanding freshman program requirements.
- If you are in U1 and thus declaring a major or Interfaculty program, review the information about program requirements in the Science section of the Undergraduate Programs E-Calendar at http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2017-2018/faculties/basc/undergraduate
Read the sections of the undergraduate programs calendar pertaining to your degree requirements, http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2017-2018/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug_basc_degree_reqs

Complete your course registration. Keep in mind that you must register for courses for both the fall and winter terms. If you are in U1, remember to register for BASC 201.

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.


Attend orientation sessions for the department offering the Interfaculty or Science major or minor you intend to complete. See www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1/programorientation for times and locations (late August and early September).

Attend the Arts Departmental Programs Fair on August 30, 2017 for information on the Arts major or minor you intend to complete. See http://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/students/new select “U1 Departmental” tab.

If you are in U1, meet with your program advisors to ensure that you are properly registered.

If you are in U0, consult with your SOUSA advisor if you have any questions about your registration.

September 5, 2017 – First day of lectures. Make sure you have signed up for at least one course by August 14, 2017 to avoid late registration fees.

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!

If you are in U0 and 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.
Students admitted with a university course background (those transferring from another university or who have been admitted to a second bachelor’s degree).

You need to complete 120 university credits for your B.A.&Sc. Due to your previous university studies, you have probably been granted some university transfer credits. You may also have received some advanced standing credits due to pre-university studies if you completed the International Baccalaureate, the French Baccalaureate, the European Baccalaureate, A-levels or AP exams, etc... For more information on advanced standing and transfer credits, and how these apply to you, please consult: http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/

Regardless of the number of advanced standing and/or transfer credits you receive, you must still complete the Arts and Science Freshman Program requirements. Your advanced standing and/or transfer credits MAY contribute to the completion of some or all of the Freshman Program requirements. In order to determine if you have any outstanding freshman program courses to complete, you must submit the online course approval form to SOUSA. You will find the form here: http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman/basc-course-approval-form. An advisor will review the form, and let you know if there are any outstanding freshman program requirements which you must complete. If you have any questions after you have submitted the form, please contact your SOUSA advisor for clarification.

In addition to your major/honours/Interfaculty and minor programs, you must also complete BASC 201 Arts & Science Integrative Topics. This course integrates information from Arts & Science (e.g. biomedical ethics; history of science; scientific reasoning; military conflict and geography; philosophy of mind, etc.) to exemplify the benefits of applying scholarship from diverse areas to a problem. You are strongly encouraged to complete BASC 201 in your U1 year.

In addition to your SOUSA advisor, who will follow you throughout the next few years, you will also have a program advisor for each major/honour/Interfaculty and minor program you declare. Program advisors specialize in the requirements of the specific program, whereas your SOUSA advisor specializes in all other aspects of the Bachelor of Science degree. Your SOUSA advisor’s name can be found on your MINERVA unofficial transcript; it is normally added to the transcript in the first week of July. Contact information for program advisors is available in the “Other Resources” section of this pamphlet.

To-do List:

- Complete and submit the online course approval form as early as possible. You will find this form at http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman/basc-course-approval-form.
- 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.
Review SOUSA procedures regarding university-level transfer credits here: 

Confirm whether or not you will be granted credit and course exemption for any coursework 
that you have completed elsewhere. For details consult 
http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/.

Review the B.A.&Sc. Freshman Program Requirements at: 
http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u0/bascfreshman/requirements 
and establish whether you have been exempted from any of these requirements. Make sure you 
register for all outstanding freshman program requirements.

Review the information about program requirements in the Arts and Science section of the 
Undergraduate Programs E-Calendar at http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2017- 
2018/faculties/basc/undergraduate

Read the sections of the undergraduate programs calendar pertaining to your degree 
requirements, http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2017- 
2018/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug_basc_degree_reqs

Complete your course registration. Keep in mind that you must register for courses for both the 
fall and winter terms. If you are in U1 or U2, remember to register for BASC 201.

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.


Attend orientation sessions for the Interfaculty program or Science major or minor you intend to 
complete. See www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/u1/programorientation for times 
and locations (late August and early September).

Attend the Arts Departmental Programs Fair on August 30, 2017 for information on the Arts 
major or minor you intend to complete. See http://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/students/new select 
“U1 Departmental” tab.

If you are in U1, meet with your program advisors to ensure that you are properly registered.

If you are in U0, consult with your SOUSA advisor if you have any questions about your 
registration.

September 5, 2017 – First day of lectures. Make sure you have signed up for at least one course 
by August 14, 2017 to avoid late registration fees.

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!
Advising FAQs

I was admitted into U1. Do I need to complete the Freshman Program requirements?

If you were admitted to U1 following the completion of a CEGEP D.E.C. in Science or in Integrated Arts and Science you are NOT required to complete the Science Freshman program.

If you were admitted to U1 due to advanced standing granted from an International Baccalaureate, a French Baccalaureate, a European Baccalaureate, A-levels, AP credits, university transfer credits or any other educational background except a Quebec CEGEP Diploma (D.E.C.) you must complete the Arts and Science Freshman program requirements, regardless of your U1 status. Your advanced standing credits may contribute to the completion of some or all of the Freshman Programs requirements. In order to determine if you have any outstanding freshman program courses to complete, you must submit the online course approval form to SOUSA. An advisor will review the form, and let you know if there are any outstanding freshman program requirements which you must complete. If you have any questions after you have submitted the form, please contact your SOUSA advisor for clarification.

The next FAQ will provide you with resources to help you to determine the McGill courses in which you can expect to receive advanced standing credits.

I expect to receive advanced standing and/or transfer credits for some previously completed coursework. What should I do to ensure that I am properly registered?

Any advanced standing and transfer credits that you receive will be listed on your Minerva unofficial transcript. Keep in mind that this may take a while. If you have any questions about your transfer credits or advanced standing please consult your SOUSA advisor. Make sure that you do not register for a course at McGill for which you have an exemption as you will not receive credit if you take the same course a second time.

For more information refer to:

If you have completed university-level courses elsewhere, consult www.mcgill.ca/science/student/newstudents/transferring-another-university to determine if you are eligible for further transfer credits and/or exemptions.

If you have a CEGEP D.E.C. please consult:
www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercredit/prospective/cegep/#specific to determine if you are exempt from any McGill courses. If you have any questions, please contact your SOUSA advisor.
**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.

**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 Freshman 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 a maximum of 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/.

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/.

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

B.A.&Sc. students are normally allowed to take a maximum of 12 credits outside of the faculties of Arts and of Science. For more information see http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2017-2018/faculties/basc/undergraduate/ug_basc_course_reqs

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/. 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 http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/dates/conflicts.

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

If you are admitted into U1 you are expected to complete your degree within eight full-time semesters. If you are admitted into U0 you are expected to complete your degree within ten
full-time semesters. If you are registered for part-time studies (taking less than 12 credits per term) this time limit does not apply to you.

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 the semester in which you obtain 120 credits will be E-flagged, which means that they will not count for credit and will be excluded from your CGPA. 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

Students who have been granted advanced standing for the International Baccalaureate, European Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement examinations, 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 advisor.

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/ (Science) AND
www.mcgill.ca/oasis/resources/departmental-academic-advisers (Arts)

Graduation Checklist:

Use these checklists to ensure that there are no surprises when you want to graduate. Review these early enough to make changes if needed: http://www.mcgill.ca/science/student/graduating-students

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/application process
- 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/

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/studentservices.

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.