

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS

COVID-19 UPDATE

MARCH 19, 2020



First, let me pass on my best wishes for all of you in these uncertain times. I hope that you are healthy and coping as well as can be expected. I also thank all of you for the extra efforts that you are making as teachers and learners. I have been uplifted by the dedication of our instructors and the resilience of our students. I am providing an update even though there is not much new happening but at least I met with Faculty of Medicine leadership this afternoon and heard a little bit more about how the university is moving forward. I will provide the next one next Wednesday March 25. At that time I will have met with the Learning Environment Committee, the Clinical Education Team, and the Faculty Council as a whole to receive updates, permitting us to respond better to any of your concerns or advice.

Communications

Our home page www.mcgill.ca/scsd now has a tab to collate SCSD specific memos that is coordinated with the Faculty of Medicine information page. All COVID-19 related messages can be found there in tabs that identify those coming from our school, the faculty, and the central McGill administration. We have received word from the administration that for some reason we are not supposed to refer to “on-line” teaching but rather “remote delivery of course work” so you will see this change in terminology in this and future messages. Faculty are now equipped to communicate with each other via MS Teams. Students and faculty can communicate via MyCourses and Zoom. We can all communicate via e-mail. Everyone is welcome to contact me at anytime via e-mail, MS Teams or Zoom.

Coursework

Instructors should have communicated their course modifications to students by the end of day Friday March 19, 2020. A major modification to our MScA program has been the shifting and lengthening of the final exam period to end on April 30, 2020, now coinciding with the university-wide exam period. All exams will be “take-home” style or administered via MyCourses. The new exam schedule will be communicated to students shortly. Pro Zoom Licences should be made available to instructors as of today, March 19.

Spring and Summer Clinical Practicums

The most difficult problem that we are dealing with is the probable delay or cancelation of the clinical practicum. In terms of planning, the provincial regulating body (OOAQ) has been meeting with Quebec government officials; the Canadian Council of University Programs is organizing a meeting with provincial and national regulators. The Clinical Education Team is meeting every second day. Many creative ideas have been proposed. Every effort is being made to ensure that our second year class can graduate and proceed to their professional lives.

Research

We have received memos indicating that laboratories must be wound down and importantly, doctoral students and laboratory staff must be paid but cannot be forced to go into work. Researchers can work however as long as that work is done remotely. All research activities that do not involve direct contact with research participants are allowed. Students and research staff cannot come onto campus after today unless they have a specific exemption. If a research project is modified to switch data collection from face-to-face to remote methods, a Protocol Deviation Form can be filed with the IRB which is still in operation. Students and faculty advisors should stay in touch with each other to prevent social isolation and/or burn-out.

COVID-19 Updates

The pandemic is making itself known in new ways. Many clear cases of community transmission are now reported. At least 8 cases of transmission to health care workers have occurred in Quebec. Therefore, the importance of continuing with self-isolation has never been more clear. Advice from experts within the Faculty of Medicine suggests that the first effects of the current self-isolation measures will be detected this weekend but this does not mean the crisis will be over. A “flattening of the curve” will not occur for quite a while after that. Thank you all for the important contribution you are making to this unprecedented collective response.