



# Memorandum

**Enrolment Services**

3415 McTavish St., McLennan Library Building  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 0C8

**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Ms. Gillian Nycum, Registrar and Executive Director, Enrolment Services

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Revisions to Calendar of Academic Dates for 2020-2021

**DATE:** December 2, 2020

**DOCUMENT #:** D20-23

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION  APPROVAL/DECISION

**ISSUE** This motion would adjust the Academic Calendar for Winter 2021 for all Faculties except the Faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences, and Dentistry. The adjustments would apply to the start and end of classes, and the Final Examination period. The dates for Reading Week would remain unchanged and the term would not extend beyond 30 April 2021.

**BACKGROUND & RATIONALE**

There is significant interest among many in the McGill community to delay the start of classes for the Winter 2021 term. The main arguments and rationale relate to the many changes brought on by the pandemic, but also because the current schedule has a shorter than normal break between final exams from the Fall 2020 term (which ends on 22 December) and the currently scheduled start of the Winter 2021 term (4 January). This impacts students and instructors, and the latter must also find time to prepare their courses for the Winter 2021 term, and course preparation can be more challenging given that most classes will be delivered remotely for the Winter 2021 term. However, delaying a start date for classes is challenging because ensuring we cover the full academic term (of 13 weeks) is necessary, and delays are simply not possible in some of the Health Science Professional Programs – they must begin on 4 January, and some of these programs already run into May.

It is also clear that having our academic term extended into May 2021 for other Faculties is problematic since many students may be starting summer jobs, or internships, and the Summer 2021 term must also begin as planned since it is already a condensed term. It is also important that the scheduled Reading Break remain unchanged as that time away from classes is of high value to our students.

These constraints mean that the most we could feasibly delay the beginning of classes would be three days (i.e., starting classes on Thursday 7 January), and this would involve making up three additional days later in the term. Therefore, adjustments to the final exam period will be necessary if there is an interest in delaying the start date of classes.

The Fall 2020 term resulted in 25% fewer final examinations being scheduled as compared to 2019, and it is reasonable to assume that there will be a similar trend towards fewer final examinations for Winter 2021. Therefore, the proposal is to reduce the final examination period to gain one additional make-up day in the schedule; therefore it is proposed the final examination period will be ten days in length instead of 11. It is also proposed that the final examination period be extended until Friday 30 April instead of the current schedule which ends on Thursday 29 April; this would make up the second day in the schedule. The third make-up day can be achieved by the removal of the ‘study day’, which is normally a single day or a weekend between the last day of classes and the start of the Final Examination Period. Given that the new proposal for the Final Examination Period would involve a start date for Final Examination on Monday 19 April, there would be a weekend as study days between the end of term and the start of the Final Examination Period.

With this proposal, the Add/Drop deadline would move from Tuesday, January 19 to Friday, January 22. The Withdrawal with Refund deadline would move from Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> to Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. No other [Key Academic Dates](#) for the Winter 2021 term would change. The dates for Reading Week would remain as scheduled.

As applicable, programs in the Faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences and Dentistry would adhere to the changes to the Add/Drop and Withdrawal with Refund deadlines and the changes to the Final Examination Period as well as the last day of term.

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**PRIOR CONSULTATION**

Delaying the start of the Winter 2021 term has been discussed by Faculty Deans, some student societies, senior Administration, various units across the University, the Emergency Operations Centre, Senate (on 18 November). A petition was also circulated that called for a delay to the start of the Winter 2021 term.

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**SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

N/A

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**IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS**

Should this motion pass Senate, a communication will be issued to the whole community that will explain the implementation of a delayed start of classes for the Winter 2021 term. Enrolment Services will adjust the academic calendar, including publicizing the changes on relevant websites and in relevant communications. Faculties would similarly be required to communicate internally to students and staff. Faculties and programs for which this change would not apply will be required to immediately communicate with their students and instructors.

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**MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL**

*Be it resolved that Senate approve the following changes to the Academic Calendar for all Faculties except the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, and the Faculty of Dentistry: For the Winter 2021 term, classes will begin on 7 January, end on Friday 16 April, and the Final Examination period would be adjusted to be ten days in duration, beginning on 19 April 2021 and ending on 30 April 2021. The ‘study day’ currently scheduled on 14 April 2021 will now be the weekend days of 17 and 18 April 2021.*

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**APPENDICES**

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