



Memorandum

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TO: Senate

FROM: Ms. Gillian Nycum, University Registrar and Executive Director (Enrolment Services)

SUBJECT: Calendar of Academic Dates for 2023-24 and Proposed Revisions to Dates for 2021-22 and 2022-23

DATE: November 18, 2020

DOCUMENT #: D20-18

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE Proposed Key Academic Dates for the 2023-2024 academic year and revised Key Academic Dates for 2021-22 and 2022-23 are presented to Senate for approval.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

For several years, McGill students have been advocating for the creation of a Fall Reading Break, citing that it would allow them to focus on both physical and mental wellness, provide extra time to study, and create an opportunity to spend time with family and friends.

Discussions about the introduction of a Fall Reading Break in previous years have led to the conclusion that there was no easy way to introduce such a break without some tradeoffs in order to maintain the same number of contact hours in the fall semester. None of the trade-offs identified in earlier discussions were deemed acceptable.

In March 2018, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) held a referendum in which 96.6% of undergraduate students voted in favour of implementing a Fall Reading Break at McGill. SSMU conducted another student survey in Fall 2018 to identify the trade-offs that are preferred by the students.

This strong call to action from students led the Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC) to form the Subcommittee on Fall Reading Break (SFRB) in January of 2019. This subcommittee was mandated to assess the feasibility of a Fall Reading Break from the perspectives of students, faculty, staff, and academic programs. In April 2019, the SFRB reported to ESAAC that a Fall Reading Break was feasible, but that further consultation was required.

In an April 2019 SSMU referendum, 75% of students voted in favour of starting the fall term prior to Labour Day (in Late August) in order to have a week-long Fall Reading Break the week of Thanksgiving. With this student preference in mind, the SFRB conducted further consultations in the Fall of 2019 regarding Fall Reading Break implementation.

The SFRB presented their findings to ESAAC in March 2020, including recommended changes to the [Guidelines regarding the setting of the University Academic Calendar of Dates](#) which were approved by Senate at the May 2020 meeting. In that proposal, the SFRB recommended a balanced approach to Academic Calendar revisions to make room in the Academic Calendar for a Fall Reading Break, by, wherever possible, not moving residence move-in weekend earlier and therefore starting the fall semester the fewest days early as possible to make room for a Fall Reading Break. In most years, this means starting the semester the Wednesday before Labour Day to make room for a Fall Reading Break, which in four out of seven years makes room in the Academic Calendar for a 5 weekday break the week of Thanksgiving (including Thanksgiving Monday); whereas in three out of seven years, a shorter break (3-4 weekday break including Thanksgiving Monday) metes out this balance. These are the years presented in this proposal, for Senate approval. The SFRB also recommended the formation of a Fall Reading Break implementation committee with some members from the SFRB to determine an implementation timeline, IT and systems needs, an implementation communications plan, a strategy for supporting students throughout the Fall Reading Break, and methodology for measuring the impact of the Fall Reading Break. The Fall reading Break Implementation Plan is presented here, for information.

PRIOR CONSULTATION	Consultations with students and faculty in Winter 2019 and Fall 2019. Endorsement of the current proposal from ESAAC.
SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS	N/A
IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS	Approval of this proposal will allow for a Fall Reading Break while maintaining contact hours in the Fall semester.
MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL	<i>Be it resolved that Senate approve the revisions to the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Calendar of Academic Dates, as presented in Appendix A.</i> <i>Be it further resolved that Senate approve the 2023-24 Calendar of Academic Dates, as presented in Appendix B.</i>
APPENDICES	Appendix A: 2021-22 and 2022-23 Calendar of Academic Dates Appendix B: 2023-24 Calendar of Academic Dates Appendix C: Fall Reading Break Implementation Plan (for information)

Proposed revisions to the Academic Calendar of dates

Fall 2021

		September 2021				
First class	Sept. 1			1	2	3
Labour Day	Sept. 6	6	7	8	9	10
Add/drop deadline	Sept. 14	13	14	15	16	17
W with refund deadline	Sept. 21	20	21	22	23	24
		27	28	29	30	
		October 2021				
						1
Thanksgiving	Oct. 11	4	5	6	7	8
Fall Break	Oct. 12-13	11	12	13	14	15
Makeup day(s)	Oct. 14, 15	18	19	20	21	22
W no refund deadline	Oct. 26	25	26	27	28	29
		November 2021				
		1	2	3	4	5
		8	9	10	11	12
		15	16	17	18	19
		22	23	24	25	26
		29	30			
		December 2021				
Last class	Dec. 6			1	2	3
Study Day(s)	Dec. 4-5 (wknd)	6	7	8	9	10
Final Exams	Dec. 7-21	13	14	15	16	17
		20	21	22	23	24
		27	28	29	30	31
McGill closed	Dec. 23-Jan. 2					

Winter 2022

		January 2022				
First class	Jan. 5	3	4	5	6	7
Add/drop deadline	Jan. 18	10	11	12	13	14
W with refund deadline	Jan. 25	17	18	19	20	21
		24	25	26	27	28
		31				
		February 2022				
			1	2	3	4
		7	8	9	10	11
		14	15	16	17	18
		21	22	23	24	25
Spring Break	Feb. 28-Mar. 4	28				
		March 2022				
			1	2	3	4
W no refund deadline	March 8	7	8	9	10	11
		14	15	16	17	18
		21	22	23	24	25
		28	29	30	31	
		April 2022				
						1
Last class	April 12	4	5	6	7	8
Good Friday/Easter Monday	April 15, 18	11	12	13	14	15
Study Day(s)	Apr. 9-10&15-18	18	19	20	21	22
Final Exams	Apr. 13-29	25	26	27	28	29

Fall 2022

2022-2023		September 2022				
First class	Aug. 31	29	30	31	1	2
Labour Day	Sept. 5	5	6	7	8	9
Add/drop deadline	Sept. 13	12	13	14	15	16
W with refund deadline	Sept. 20	19	20	21	22	23
		26	27	28	29	30
		October 2022				
Thanksgiving	Oct. 10	3	4	5	6	7
Fall Break	Oct. 11-12	10	11	12	13	14
Makeup day(s)	Oct. 13-14	17	18	19	20	21
W no refund deadline	Oct. 25	24	25	26	27	28
		31				
		November 2022				
			1	2	3	4
		7	8	9	10	11
		14	15	16	17	18
		21	22	23	24	25
		28	29	30		
		December 2022				
				1	2	
Last class	Dec. 5	5	6	7	8	9
Study Day(s)	Dec. 6	12	13	14	15	16
Final Exams	Dec. 7-21	19	20	21	22	23
		26	27	28	29	30
McGill closed	Dec. 23-Jan. 2					

Winter 2023

		January 2023				
		2	3	4	5	6
First class	Jan. 4	9	10	11	12	13
Add/drop deadline	Jan. 17	16	17	18	19	20
W with refund deadline	Jan. 24	23	24	25	26	27
		30	31			
		February 2023				
				1	2	3
		6	7	8	9	10
		13	14	15	16	17
		20	21	22	23	24
Spring Break	Feb. 27-Mar. 3	27	28			
		March 2023				
				1	2	3
W no refund deadline	March 7	6	7	8	9	10
		13	14	15	16	17
		20	21	22	23	24
		27	28	29	30	31
		April 2023				
Good Friday/Easter Monday	April 7, 10	3	4	5	6	7
Last class	April 13	10	11	12	13	14
Makeup day(s)	Apr. 12, 13	17	18	19	20	21
Study Day(s)	Apr. 15-16	24	25	26	27	28
Final Exams	Apr. 14-28					

Change in Winter: Original approved winter dates had only 10 days for final exams, Apr. 17-28. By moving the study day to April 15-16 (weekend) we can make 11 days for exams. Note that the 7-10 is a long weekend.

Fall 2023 (new)

		September 2023				
First class	Aug. 30	28	29	30	31	1
Labour Day	Sept. 4	4	5	6	7	8
Add/drop deadline	Sept. 12	11	12	13	14	15
W with refund deadline	Sept. 19	18	19	20	21	22
		25	26	27	28	29
		October 2023				
		2	3	4	5	6
Thanksgiving	Oct. 9	9	10	11	12	13
Fall Break	Oct. 6, 10-11	16	17	18	19	20
W no refund deadline	Oct. 24	23	24	25	26	27
		30	31			
		November 2023				
			1	2	3	
		6	7	8	9	10
		13	14	15	16	17
		20	21	22	23	24
Makeup day(s)	Nov. 30	27	28	29	30	
		December 2023				
						1
Last class	Dec. 5	4	5	6	7	8
Study Day(s)	Dec. 6	11	12	13	14	15
Final Exams	Dec. 7-21	18	19	20	21	22
		25	26	27	28	29

Winter 2024 (new)

		January 2024				
		1	2	3	4	5
First class	Jan. 4	8	9	10	11	12
Add/drop deadline	Jan. 16	15	16	17	18	19
W with refund deadline	Jan. 23	22	23	24	25	26
		29	30	31		
		February 2024				
				1	2	
		5	6	7	8	9
		12	13	14	15	16
		19	20	21	22	23
W no refund deadline	Feb. 27	26	27	28	29	
		March 2024				
						1
Spring Break	Mar. 4-8	4	5	6	7	8
		11	12	13	14	15
		18	19	20	21	22
Good Friday	Mar. 29	25	26	27	28	29
		April 2024				
Easter Monday	Apr. 1	1	2	3	4	5
Makeup day(s)	Apr. 11	8	9	10	11	12
Last class	Apr. 12	15	16	17	18	19
Study Day(s)	Apr. 13-14	22	23	24	25	26
Final Exams	Apr. 15-30	29	30			

For Senate Information: Fall Reading Break implementation plan

IT and systems implementation

- IT is identifying reports and processes that reference a term as these will need to be updated.
- Make Up Days: Some fall terms will now have more than 1 make up day, when the system typically works with only one. This may require an IT business need that will need to be prioritized.

Communications plan

The Implementation Committee has developed a communications plan with the following key messages:

- Proposed revised Academic Calendar of dates
- The process and consultations that led to the proposed dates, including the robust conversations regarding trade offs to maintain contact hours
- The Fall Reading Break was an initiative driven by students, and made possible with collaboration from student associations, units and Faculties across McGill.
- Students have shown strong support for starting the semester earlier as a trade off for making time in the fall academic calendar for a Fall Reading Break.
- The Fall Reading Break is intended as a week for students to catch up on work, rest, take care of mental and/or physical wellness needs, and see family and friends.
- The purpose of the FRB is to relieve student stress—therefore assignments and exams should be scheduled accordingly (ie. assignments should not immediately follow the Fall Reading Break or be due during the Fall Reading Break).
- The Fall Reading Break is an opportunity to support student wellness and help students feel prepared for the rest of the semester. Staff in academic units will be consulted to develop academic support programming for students over the Fall Reading Break.

Impact Assessment

Fall Reading Break impact assessment will measure five factors, listed below alongside a summary of the implications for various stakeholders identified through consultations:

Factors	Implications for Students	Implications for Academic and Service Units
1) Time management/ workload distribution	Time management and workload	Teaching and preparation time, administrative time, vacation schedules, conferences
2) Wellbeing	Student wellbeing (e.g., especially academic stress, mental health, sleep)	Shifts in support needs for student wellbeing, staff wellbeing affected by scheduling changes
3) Social connections	Social connections (e.g., time with family, social isolation, loneliness)	Social connections (e.g., time with family; vacation schedules)
4) Financial	Finances (e.g., loss of summer job revenue, extra housing costs)	Potential loss of revenue (e.g., residences)
5) Overall Performance	Academic performance	Potential timing conflicts: e.g., conferences, research grants, administrative time for internships

The impact of the Fall Reading Break on these 5 factors will be assessed via 2 separate surveys that will be run (a) the week following the Fall Reading Break and (b) the first week back after the holiday winter break. Surveys will allow respondents to indicate whether they are students, staff, or faculty, and they will use a combination of Likert scale and open ended questions to allow for data analysis of the overall impact of the Fall Reading Break as well as for additional comments to be collected. Data will be analyzed and reported back to ESAAC.