



# Memorandum

**Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)**

James Administration Building, Room 621

845 Sherbrooke St. West

Tel: 514-398-3109 | Fax: 514-398-3576

**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Morton J. Mendelson, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)  
Chair, Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs

**SUBJECT:** Guidelines and Calendars of Academic Dates for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014

**DATE:** April 27, 2011

**DOCUMENT #:** D10-63

**ACTION**  INFORMATION  APPROVAL/DECISION

**REQUIRED:**

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**ISSUE:** *Guidelines Regarding the Setting of the University Calendar of Dates and proposed Calendars of Academic Dates for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.*

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**BACKGROUND  
&  
RATIONALE:**

The Guidelines Regarding the Setting of the University Calendar of Dates, which were approved by Senate on 3 December 2003, state principles that have been used in setting McGill's Calendar of Academic Dates (CAD) – e.g., a 13-week term, a 12-day exam period, etc.). In 2009-2010, students suggested revisions to the Guidelines that would have major implications for academic programs, most notably a reduction to a 12-week term. Although the suggestions were not incorporated into the CAD for 2011-2012, a work group, chaired by Deans Ellen Aitken and Daniel Jutras, was struck to consider the suggestions as well as other aspects of the structure of McGill's academic year.

The work group consulted widely. Faculties strongly supported the maintenance of a 13-week semester for reasons of academic standards and, in some cases, accreditation; however, faculties were open to other possible changes in the CAD. Students were surveyed by their associations, in collaboration with the administration, to determine their support for various options in revising the CAD.

As a result of the consultation, revisions to the CAD for 2011-2012 were proposed to Senate and approved on 23 March 2011. Given the approval of the revisions, the work group proposed amendments to the Guidelines (Appendix A), which were approved by the Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs (CESA) for recommendation to Senate.

In addition, the recommendations were used to generate Calendars of Academic Dates for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 (Appendix B), which were also approved by CESA for recommendation to Senate.

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**MOTION OR  
RESOLUTION  
FOR APPROVAL:**

*Be it resolved that, on the recommendation of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), the proposed changes to the Guidelines Regarding the Setting of the University Calendar of Academic Dates be approved.*

*Be it resolved that, on the recommendation of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), the Calendars of Academic Dates for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 be approved.*

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**PRIOR  
CONSULTATION:**

Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC) (5 April 2011)  
Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs (CESA) (7 April 2011)  
Survey of students.

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**NEXT STEPS:**

Dissemination via the McGill website and other internal methods.

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**APPENDICES:**

- A. Proposed Changes to the Guidelines Regarding the Setting of the University Calendar of Dates
  - B. Proposed Calendars of Academic Dates for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014
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## Appendix A

### Proposed Changes to the Guidelines Regarding the Setting of the University Calendar of Dates

Approved by the Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs  
April 7, 2011

| Guidelines Regarding the Setting of the University Calendar of Dates   | Guidelines Regarding the Setting of the University Calendar of <u>Academic</u> Dates   |
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| <p><b>Preamble</b></p> <p>The 2003 CSA Workgroup's discussion was guided by the premise that academic considerations should have priority in determining the calendar of dates. The following proposals, a combination of continuation of current practice and some refinements, respect this priority. Priority concerns included allowing for sufficient instructional time over each fall and winter semester, opportunity for course content through to the end of each term to be taught and learned, and an examination schedule that allows some time for review.</p> | <p><b>Preamble</b></p> <p>The 2003 CSA Workgroup's <u>2010-2011 Calendar of Academic Dates Work Group's</u> discussion was guided by the premise that academic considerations should have priority in determining the calendar of <u>academic</u> dates. The following proposals, a combination of continuation of current practice and some refinements, respect this priority. Priority concerns included allowing for sufficient instructional time over each <u>Fall and Winter semester term</u>, opportunity for course content <u>to be taught and learned</u> through to the end of each term <u>to be taught and learned</u>, and an examination schedule that allows some time for review.</p>   |
| <p>Changes from typical current practice include starting the fall semester at the beginning of September, prior to Labor Day if necessary, setting a policy for the scheduling of Study Break (in the last full or nearly full week of February). Current practices that are proposed to continue include affirming the standard of 39 contact hours of instruction in 3-credit courses, a 13-week semester, a study day (or intervening weekend) in each semester, a Study Week in the winter term, and formally approving the Calendar of Dates two years in advance.</p> | <p>Changes from typical current practice include <del>starting the fall semester at the beginning of September, prior to Labor Day, if necessary, setting a policy for the scheduling of Study Break (in the last full or nearly full week of February).</del> <u>normally starting the Fall term on the Tuesday following Labour Day, scheduling the Study Break in the first full or nearly full week of March, shortening the final examination period to 10 days, scheduling the last day of Winter final examinations as close as possible to the end of April, allowing evening final examinations from Mondays to Thursdays, and formally approving the Calendar of Academic Dates at least two years in advance.</u> <del>Current practices that are proposed to continue include affirming</del> <u>The Work Group recommends maintaining the current</u> standard of 39 contact hours of instruction in 3-credit courses, a 13-week <u>semester term</u>, and a study day (or intervening weekend) <u>when possible</u> in each <u>semester term</u>, <u>a Study Week in the winter term</u>, and formally approving the Calendar of Dates two years in advance.</p> |
| <p><b>1. General Calendar Issues, Fall Term</b></p>  | <p><b>1. General Calendar Issues, Fall <u>and Winter Terms</u></b></p> <p><u>There shall be at least 130 teaching days over the Fall and Winter terms, taken together.</u></p>   |
| <p>The Work Group recommends that the Fall semester should normally start on the first day of September that</p>   | <p><b>2. General Calendar Issues, Fall Term</b></p> <p>The Work Group recommends that the Fall <u>semester term</u> should normally start on the <u>first day of</u></p>   |

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| <p>is not a weekend or Labor Day, e.g., September 1st, unless a later start can also ensure that the following priorities are met, in this order:</p>   | <p><del>September that is not a weekend or Tuesday following Labour Day e.g., September 1st, unless a later start can also ensure</del> <u>and that it be arranged so</u> that the following priorities are met, in this order:</p>  |
| <p>(a) There is a full 13 week semester (equivalent to 39 contact hours for a 3-credit course).</p>   | <p>(a) There is a full <u>13-week semester term</u> (equivalent to 39 contact hours for a 3-credit course). <u>In the event that the schedule for a particular pattern does not permit 39 contact hours or that courses must be cancelled (on an election Monday, for example), Faculties shall have the discretion to determine how the missing hour(s) shall be made up.</u></p>   |
| <p>(b) A 12-day examination schedule can be provided, without weekends.</p>   | <p>(b) A <del>12</del><u>10</u>-day examination schedule can be provided, without weekends, <u>but including Monday to Thursday evenings.</u></p>  |
| <p>(c) A one-day study break or a weekend separates the end of classes and beginning of examinations.</p>   | <p>(c) A one-day study break or a weekend separates the end of classes and beginning of examinations <u>when possible.</u></p>   |
| <p>(d) The semester should be contained within the four months from September to December, with the exception of new student orientation activities at the end of August. Conversation noted that evening exams might solve the room problem, but they do not solve the problems of consecutive examinations. Weekend exam scheduling would add to deferral requests on religious grounds.</p> <p>The Work group did not discuss Continuing Education examinations. The only suggestion applies to the spring courses (below).</p> <p>In several years, as in fall 2003, it will be necessary to make up for a missing Monday. This can be done by closing the cycle of 13 Mondays on a different day of the week. This may require that some sessional instructors (e.g., who have full-time jobs elsewhere) are clearly alerted to this when they sign their contracts.</p> | <p><del>(d) The semester</del> <u>Fall term</u> should be contained within the four months from September to December, with the exception of new student orientation activities at the end of August. <del>Conversation noted that evening exams might solve the room problem, but they do not solve the problems of consecutive examinations. Weekend exam scheduling would add to deferral requests on religious grounds.</del></p> <p><del>The Work group did not discuss Continuing Education examinations. The only suggestion applies to the spring courses (below).</del></p> <p><del>In several years, as in fall 2003, it will be necessary to make up for a missing Monday. This can be done by closing the cycle of 13 Mondays on a different day of the week. This may require that some sessional instructors (e.g., who have full-time jobs elsewhere) are clearly alerted to this when they sign their contracts.</del></p> |
| <p><b>2. General Calendar Issues, Winter Semester</b></p> <p>The advice parallels that for the Fall Semester, with the following differences: The Winter semester should start on the first day of January that is not a holiday or weekend, e.g., January 2nd. This starting date does have the disadvantage that the day before is a public holiday and many city services and commercial activities are closed. One possible way to start a day later would be if Easter Monday became a regular day of instruction. The Work group supports this</p>  | <p><b><u>2 3. General Calendar Issues, Winter Semester Term</u></b></p> <p>The advice parallels that for the Fall <u>Term. Semester,</u> with the following differences: <del>The Winter semestershould start on the first day of January that is not a holiday or weekend, e.g., January 2nd. This starting date does have the disadvantage that the day before is a public holiday and many city services and commercial activities are closed. One possible way to start a day later would be if Easter Monday became a regular day of instruction. The Work group supports</del></p>   |

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| <p>alternative, but such a decision does not lie exclusively within the mandate of the Committee on Student Affairs. The Winter semester should be arranged so as to ensure that the following priorities are met, in this order:</p>  | <p><del>this alternative, but such a decision does not lie exclusively within the mandate of the Committee on Student Affairs. The <u>Work Group recommends that the Winter semester term</u> should be arranged so as to ensure that the <u>last day of examinations is scheduled as close as possible to the end of April in order to provide a reasonable break between the end of the Fall examination period and the beginning of the Winter term, and that the following priorities are met, in this order:</u></del></p>  |
| <p>(a) There is a full 13 week semester (equivalent to 39 contact hours for a 3-credit course).</p>  | <p>(a) There is a full <u>13-week semester term</u> (equivalent to 39 contact hours for a 3-credit course). <u>In the event that the schedule for a particular pattern does not permit 39 contact hours or that courses must be cancelled (on an election Monday, for example), Faculties shall have the discretion to determine how the missing hour(s) shall be made up.</u></p>   |
| <p>b) A 12-day examination schedule can be provided, without weekends.</p>   | <p>(b) A <del>12</del><u>10</u>-day examination schedule can be provided, without weekends, <u>but including Monday to Thursday evenings.</u></p>  |
| <p>(c) There is a Study Week.</p>  | <p>(c) There is a Study Week, <u>which will normally occur in the first week of March, where necessary including one or two days at the end of February.</u></p>   |
| <p>(d) There is a study day or weekend between the last day of scheduled classes and the first day of examinations.</p>  | <p>(d) There is a study day or weekend between the last day of scheduled classes and the first day of examinations <u>when possible.</u></p>   |
| <p>(e) The semester can be completed within four months, January to April.</p>   | <p>(e) The <del>semester Winter term can be completed</del> <u>should be contained within the four months from</u> January to April.</p>   |
| <p>(f) Deferred examinations may be held in May.</p>   | <p>(f) <u>Deferred and supplemental examinations for the Fall term</u> may be held in May.</p>   |
| <p><b>3. Coordination of Study Week</b></p> <p>The work group noted that other Montreal universities, CEGEPs, and schools took winter breaks over at least a four-week period. In addition, it was not possible to “take a leadership role” in bringing this diversity together since most other institutions settle these dates as part of a syndical agreement and many try to locate the break about midterm, which is different due to different semester schedules. Since Concordia University sets its dates some five years ahead, it would be hard to “lead” in that respect. Instead, the Work group recommends a clear policy that would normally allow McGill students and employees to anticipate into the future when this break would occur. The Work Group recommends that the tradition of a</p> | <p><del><b>3. Coordination of Study Week</b></del></p> <p><del>The work group noted that other Montreal universities, CEGEPs, and schools took winter breaks over at least a four-week period. In addition, it was not possible to “take a leadership role” in bringing this diversity together since most other institutions settle these dates as part of a syndical agreement and many try to locate the break about midterm, which is different due to different semester schedules. Since Concordia University sets its dates some five years ahead, it would be hard to “lead” in that respect. Instead, the Work group recommends a clear policy that would normally allow McGill students and employees to anticipate into the future when this break would occur. The Work Group recommends that the tradition of a</del></p> |

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| <p>Study Week continue and that it normally occur in the last full week of February, where necessary including one or two days at the beginning of March.</p>   | <p><del>Study Week continue and that it normally occur in the last full week of February, where necessary including one or two days at the beginning of March.</del></p>  |
| <p><b>4. Passover Examination Conflicts</b></p> <p>Senate did not ask the Work Group to address this question, but the earlier suggestion within the Committee on Student Affairs for such a review did raise the question of daytime examinations during Passover.</p>   | <p><b>4. Passover <u>Religious Observance</u> Examination Conflicts</b></p> <p><del>Senate did not ask the Work Group to address this question, but the earlier suggestion within the Committee on Student Affairs for such a review did raise the question of daytime examinations during Passover.</del></p>  |
| <p>Passover occurs during the examination period in some years, and not in others. The Work Group affirmed that the existing policy on deferral of examinations in respect of religious observance remained the preferred way to address such conflicts. This policy (and the Passover dates) will be expressed explicitly in future Calendar proposals so that affected students may make suitable arrangements as soon as the spring examination schedule is known.</p> | <p><del>Passover occurs during the examination period in some years, and not in others.</del> The Work Group affirmed that the existing policy on deferral of examinations in respect of religious observance remained the preferred way to address such conflicts. This policy (and the <del>Passover</del> dates <u>for Passover</u>) will be expressed explicitly in future Calendar proposals so that affected students may make suitable arrangements as soon as the spring examination schedule is known.</p> |
| <p>The Work Group did not make any special recommendations about Continuing Education examinations except to ask the Centre for Continuing Education to consider not scheduling evening examinations on the nights of Passover Seders, if possible.</p>   | <p><del>The Work Group did not make any special recommendations about Continuing Education examinations except to ask the Centre for Continuing Education to consider not scheduling evening examinations on the nights of Passover Seders, if possible.</del></p>  |
| <p><b>5. Impact on Orientation</b></p> <p>The Work Group noted that the early start to both semesters might have an impact on Orientation, Discover McGill, and Frosh, requiring compression of certain activities. The possibility of a brief January Frosh was also suggested. These activities are flexible and will be able to adapt with sufficient notice.</p>  | <p><b><del>5. Impact on Orientation</del></b></p> <p><del>The Work Group noted that the early start to both semesters might have an impact on Orientation, Discover McGill, and Frosh, requiring compression of certain activities. The possibility of a brief January Frosh was also suggested. These activities are flexible and will be able to adapt with sufficient notice.</del></p>  |
| <p><b>6. Schedule of Calendar Approval</b></p> <p>The Work Group recommends that the University continue its practice of setting the Calendar of Dates two years in advance.</p>  | <p><b><del>6.</del> <u>5. Schedule of Calendar of Academic Dates</u> Approval</b></p> <p>The Work Group recommends that the University continue its practice of setting the Calendar of <u>Academic Dates</u> <u>at least</u> two years in advance.</p>   |

## Appendix B

### Calendars of Academic Dates (2012-13, 2013-14)

Approved by the Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs

April 7, 2011

| Year    | Semester | Classes Start | Reading Week | Classes end            | Exam prep  | Exams begin | Exams end | Schedule of Pattern End Dates   |
|---------|----------|---------------|--------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| 2012-13 | Fall     | T, Sept 4     | n/a          | T, Dec 4 <sup>1</sup>  | W, Dec 5   | R, Dec 6    | W, Dec 19 | <sup>1</sup> T, Dec. 4 will follow a Mon schedule.<br>M, MW, MWF & MTR patterns will end on <b>T, Dec. 4</b> .<br>WF, TRF & F patterns will end on <b>F, Nov. 30</b> .<br>TR & R patterns will end on <b>R, Nov. 29</b> .<br>T & W patterns will end on <b>T, Nov. 27</b> and <b>W, Nov. 28</b> respectively.<br><b>There is no shortfall of contact hours for any pattern.</b> |
|         | Winter   | M, Jan 7      | Mar 4-8      | T, Apr 16 <sup>2</sup> | n/a        | W, Apr 17   | T, Apr 30 | <sup>2</sup> T, Apr. 16 will follow a Fri schedule.<br>MWF, TRF, WF & F patterns will end on <b>T, Apr 16</b> .<br>MTR, MW & M patterns will end on <b>M, Apr 15</b> .<br>TR & R patterns will end on <b>R, Apr 11</b> .<br>T & W patterns will end on <b>T, Apr 9</b> and <b>W, Apr 10</b> respectively.<br><b>There is no shortfall of contact hours for any pattern.</b>     |
| 2013-14 | Fall     | T, Sept 3     | n/a          | T, Dec 3 <sup>3</sup>  | W, Dec 4   | R, Dec 5    | Dec 18    | <sup>3</sup> T, Dec. 3 will follow a Mon schedule.<br>M, MW, MWF & MTR patterns will end on <b>T, Dec. 3</b> .<br>WF, TRF & F patterns will end on <b>F, Nov. 29</b> .<br>TR & R patterns will end on <b>R, Nov. 28</b> .<br>T & W patterns will end on <b>T, Nov. 26</b> and <b>W, Nov. 27</b> respectively.<br><b>There is no shortfall of contact hours for any pattern.</b> |
|         | Winter   | M, Jan 6      | Mar 3-7      | F, Apr 11 <sup>4</sup> | Wknd 12/13 | M, Apr 14   | T, Apr 29 | <sup>4</sup> Good Friday and Easter Monday occur during the exam period.<br>MWF, TRF, WF & F patterns end on <b>F, Apr 11</b> .<br>TR, MTR & R patterns end on <b>R, Apr 10</b> .<br>MW & W patterns end on <b>W, Apr 9</b> .<br>M & T patterns will end on <b>M, Apr 7</b> and <b>T, Apr 8</b> respectively.<br><b>There is no shortfall of contact hours for any pattern.</b> |

#### Key Dates 2012-13

Labour Day: September 3, 2012  
 Thanksgiving: October 8, 2012  
 New Year's Day: Tuesday, January 1, 2013  
 Good Friday: Friday, March 29, 2013  
 Easter Monday: Monday, April 1, 2013  
 Passover begins: Tuesday, Mar 26  
 (commences at sundown Mar 25)  
 Passover ends: Tuesday, April 2

#### Key Dates 2013-14

Labour Day: September 2, 2013  
 Thanksgiving: October 14, 2013  
 New Year's Day: Wednesday, January 1, 2014  
 Good Friday: Friday, April 18, 2014  
 Easter Monday: Monday, April 21, 2014  
 Passover begins: Tuesday, April 15  
 (commences at sundown Apr 14)  
 Passover ends: Tuesday, April 22