



# Memorandum

Office of the Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs)

845 Sherbrooke Street West, Suite 504

Montreal, Quebec H3A 0G4

Tel: 514-398-4177 | Fax: 514-398-4768

**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Christopher Buddle, Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs)

**SUBJECT:** Update on New Models of Academic Program Delivery

**DATE:** January 18, 2023

**DOCUMENT #:** D22-34

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION  APPROVAL/DECISION

**ISSUE** The draft recommendations by the New Models of Academic Program Delivery are being presented to Senate for information, discussion and feedback.

## BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

The [New Models of Academic Program Delivery](#) workgroup has been active for over a year, and is “tasked with recommending a strategy and direction for the evolution of academic program delivery at McGill that will serve as a basis for growth and change over the next decade or more”. The workgroup was formed in part because of the shift in our approach to teaching and learning brought about by the pandemic, but also due to trends in the higher education sector more generally.

The workgroup consulted broadly and listened to ideas and concerns from the community. While there was general consensus that clear definitions and frameworks were needed for some of the emerging themes (e.g., blended learning, program types), it was also clear that any implementation of this work must be attentive to workload and wellbeing, and a need to ensure appropriate resources are in place. The workgroup also delved into relevant literature and scanned comparable institutions.

The thirteen recommendations are grouped into five thematic areas:

- Supporting the use of one learning across a range of teaching activities
- Supporting creative, innovative, and flexible program development to meet new priorities and the changing needs of students, and to meet changing job markets
- Increasing offerings in the summer, with a goal of increasing access, increasing efficiency of the use of our campuses, and increased revenue generation
- Longer-term, developing a consistent and more intentional approach to experiential learning across academic programs



- Longer-term, ensuring our new third-century strategic priorities and projects connect to academic program development, respond to societal needs and more generally evolve from the work of the New Models of Academic Program Delivery workgroup, but also recognize the real constraints and issues pertaining to space and resources.

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**PRIOR  
CONSULTATION**

The New Models of Academic Program Delivery has consulted broadly, over two time periods (Spring/Summer, Fall-present), and the Faculty Liaisons have consulted within Faculties. Consultations to date have included: Senior Administration, Deans, Academic Leaders, Student Leaders, MAUT, Faculties, Enrolment Services, Teaching and Learning Services, Services for Students, Council of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies, Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC), Office of the Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs), McGill Office of Sustainability

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**SUSTAINABILITY  
CONSIDERATIONS**

Part of the consultations included discussion with McGill's Office of Sustainability, and there are sustainability implications when the final report of the Workgroup is finalized (e.g., impacts due to reduced travel because of opportunities for some online teaching).

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**IMPACT OF  
DECISION AND  
NEXT STEPS**

The draft recommendations are being presented to Senate for feedback so that the workgroup can continue with drafting its final report. Some elements of its final report will return to Senate for approval, proposed to occur before the end of the the current Academic Year.

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**MOTION OR  
RESOLUTION  
FOR APPROVAL**

N/A

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Definitions for online/blended learning  
Appendix B: Definitions for program types  
Appendix C: Presentation on draft recommendations from the New Models of Academic Program Delivery workgroup

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**D22-34 Appendix A:**

**Definitions related to course modes, including online and blended learning at McGill:**

**Asynchronous** teaching activities that are normally unscheduled in which the course materials or activities are prepared and designed ahead of time to be accessed by the student at a time of their choosing

**Blended learning** (or blended course) refers to teaching and learning activities made up of a combination of online and in-person course components, both of which are necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the course; it results in a reduction in the number of in-person hours scheduled for a course.

*Possible Blended Learning sub-levels:*



**Distance learning** (or distance education) is general terminology that refers to students learning at a distance from their instructor, which assumes students are physically located off-campus. This is often used interchangeably with online learning.

**Hybrid learning** (or Hyflex): teaching activities in which some students are physically present and others attend online at the same time, with all students having the same learning opportunities to participate and engage with the classroom activities

**In-person learning** (or in-person course) the default modality of course delivery in which students are expected to physically attend the course activities in person to achieve the learning outcomes.

**Online learning** (or online course) refers to teaching and learning activities that have been designed so that all learning outcomes can be achieved using online tools, therefore a student's physical presence on campus is not necessary.

*Update on New Models of Academic Program Delivery*

**Remote Delivery** (or Remote Instruction): a situational need to deliver a course online that would normally be delivered in person, sometimes requiring the implementation of additional technologies on an ad-hoc basis.

**Synchronous** scheduled teaching activities that involve active or live teaching and learning, whether online or in-person.

## **D22-34 Appendix B:**

### **Definitions of program types**

#### ***For-Credit:***

**Blended Program:** an academic program in which the teaching and learning activities are designed to be a combination of online and in-person program components (University-approved courses or parts of courses), both of which are necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the program.

**Modular degree:** Non-thesis (i.e., course-based or project-based) graduate degrees consisting of at least 45 credits, generally completed over a one-year period and divided into three modules: a first module designed to deepen the disciplinary knowledge; a second module designed to complement the student's disciplinary knowledge through a set of University courses to broaden their skill set in complementary areas—either as a coherent package of courses from another discipline; a third module with an emphasis on experiential learning or similar opportunities to apply acquired knowledge and skills

**Online Program:** an academic program that has been expressly designed for online delivery through the intentional implementation of instructional activities and selected technologies that support the achievement of program learning outcomes. All University-approved courses and course components are done online.

**Program (or Academic Program):** A University-approved structured selection of official courses within an area of study or discipline.

**Short programs:** Units of achievement, that are credited, credentialled, and transcribed, in smaller units than a degree such as certificates or diplomas. Short programs may also be delivered over a shorter or condensed period of time.

**Stackable degrees:** A degree formed by combining or “stacking” short program credentials that are recognized as units of achievement but are smaller in scale than a degree. Stackable degrees are flexible in terms of completion time, and the student is granted a credential for each recognized unit of achievement before obtaining the full (existing) stackable degree.

#### ***Non-Credit:***

**Micro-credentials:** short units of validated learning focused on the acquisition of industry-relevant competencies. The successful completion of a micro-credential is generally recognized and recorded through alternative digital credentials (ADCs), often called digital badges.

**Workshops:** Activities that focus on the acquisition of specific competencies, often technical in nature. Workshops are not subject to central approvals and do not carry university credit or Continuing Education Units and do not appear on official university transcripts.

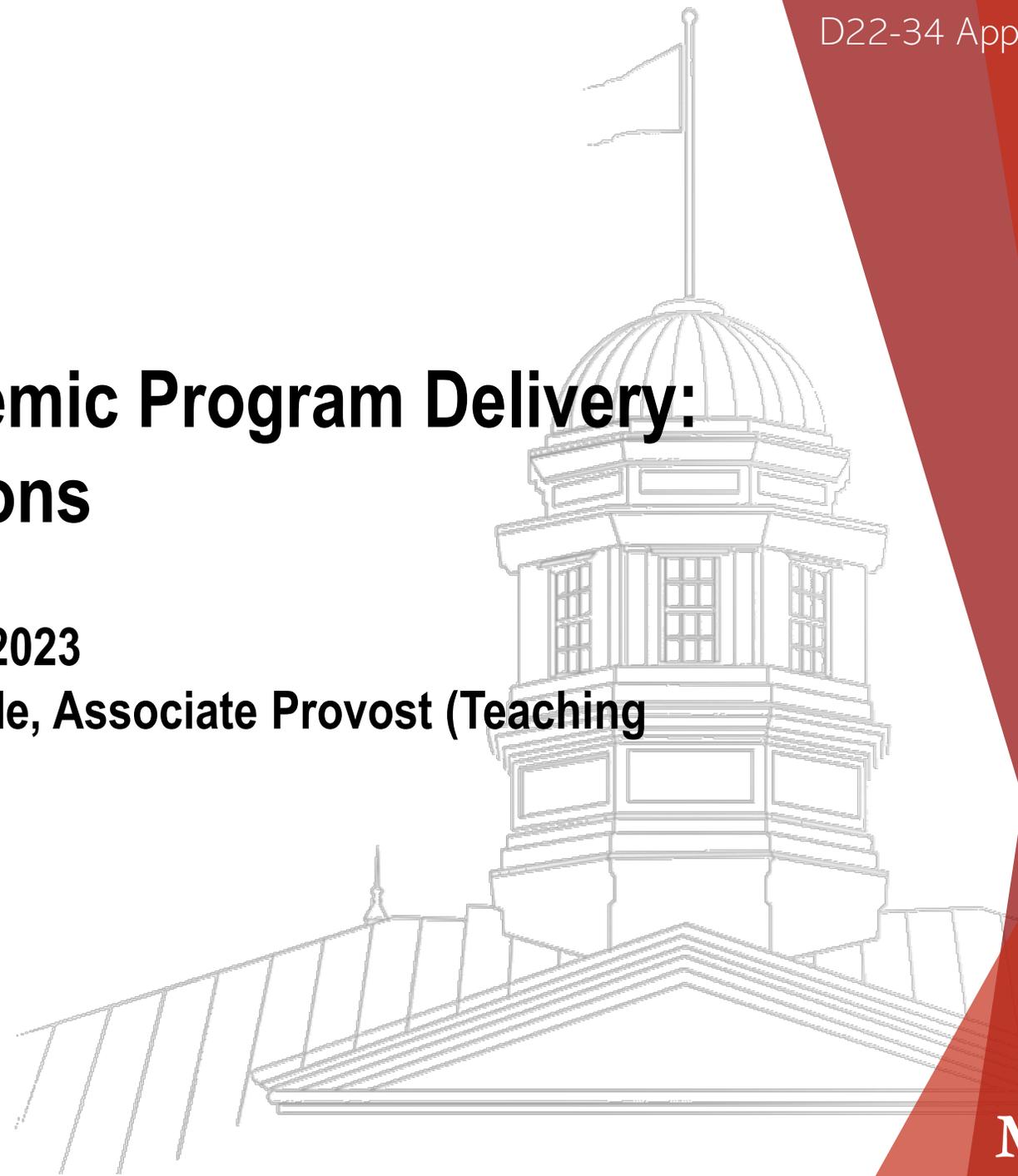
#### ***Other:***

**Experiential Learning** is the general application of academic content to real-world situations, be it within the classroom, the community, or the workplace, accompanied by deliberate reflection on these applications. Experiential learning advances and complements program- or course-based learning outcomes and sometimes focuses on employability skills.

# **New Models of Academic Program Delivery: Draft Recommendations**

**Senate Presentation – January 2023**

**Presented by Christopher Buddle, Associate Provost (Teaching  
and Academic Programs)**



# New Models of Academic Program Delivery - Mandate

- ▶ Tasked with recommending a strategy and direction for the evolution of academic program delivery at McGill that will serve as a basis for growth and change over the next decade or more.
- ▶ Consider broad pedagogical trends and evolving best practices with respect to, for example, assessment of student learning, remote and blended learning, applied and experiential learning opportunities, and opportunities for multidisciplinary and collaborative program delivery.
- ▶ Identify opportunities for change, prioritization, sequencing, and help develop pathways for implementation.
- ▶ More details and membership listed at: [www.mcgill.ca/newmad](http://www.mcgill.ca/newmad)

# Reminder: Why are we doing this work?

## Opportunity:

- ▶ How and in what way can we leverage what we learned recently about new ways of teaching and learning?
- ▶ Should we consider different ways of using classroom time and teaching spaces?
- ▶ What new programs, tools, or different spaces may create opportunities for McGill?

## Risk Mitigation:

- ▶ Are our programs and offerings able to adapt or buffer against possible changes in student enrolments?
- ▶ Are we providing the right kinds of programs with the right mix of teaching approaches (e.g., online, blended, experiential learning) to address demands for more flexible offerings?

## Efficiency:

- ▶ Can we improve how we use our academic space, including year-round?
- ▶ Can we consider doing some things differently to support concerns about wellbeing or workloads?

# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

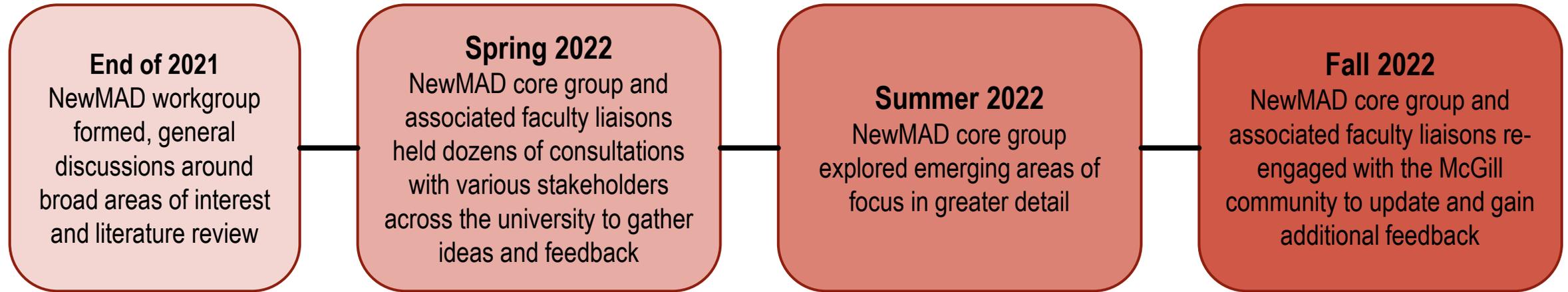
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*“The mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education...”*

- ▶ The design and delivery of McGill’s Academic Programs are at the heart of the University’s mission, and students’ experience at the University is grounded by their academic experience.
- ▶ We have a shared responsibility to deliver the highest quality academic programs, which includes adapting, leveraging, and building upon new technologies, pedagogies, and other external forces in our society.
- ▶ McGill is in its third century, and we have ambitious ideas that are rooted in the past two hundred years of excellence in academics. Our future is defined by decisions we make today about new programs, and the new ways of teaching and learning, and how we use our spaces, virtual and physical.

# Where we are today:

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## Main Concerns from the McGill Community

- Impacts on wellbeing and workload
- New initiatives require new resources or reallocation of resources
- Don't fix what isn't broken
- Respecting local decision-making / autonomy
- Developing University-level definitions around online/blended learning and program types is necessary

## Emerging Areas of Focus

1. Blended learning: definitions and approvals
2. New program development: definitions, principles, and framework
3. Summer offerings: opportunities and considerations

**TODAY:** draft recommendations that have emerged from discussions and consultations, environmental scans, and the literature

# Consultations and Feedback Sessions - overview

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## Spring/Summer 2022:

- ▶ Approximately 20 sessions held by New Models of Academic Program Delivery workgroup Chair or members
  - ▶ E.g., Deans, Senior Administration, Academic Leadership Forum, Faculty Matters, MAUT, student leaders
- ▶ Faculty Liaisons hosted feedback/consultation sessions, and/or send out surveys

## Fall 2022-present:

- ▶ Approximately 15 sessions held by New Models of Academic Program Delivery workgroup Chair or members, with additional attention on non-Faculty units
  - ▶ E.g., Deans, Senior Administration, Student Leaders, Teaching and Learning Services, Council of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, McGill Office of Sustainability, Enrolment Services Leadership team, Student Services leadership team, ESAAC, external stakeholders
- ▶ Faculty Liaisons continued to hold their own feedback/consultation sessions, or send out surveys

## Other University work connected to New Models of Academic Program delivery:

### ▶ Academic accommodations

- ▶ The Dean of Students has initiated a workgroup addressing academic accommodations for students

### ▶ Accessibility

- ▶ An Accessibility Strategy working group has been created

### ▶ Assessment

- ▶ The implementation of the Policy on Assessment of Student Learning has started

# Summary of Recommendations

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## Short-term Recommendations (1-2 years)

### Theme A: Online/Blended Learning

McGill will support the **use of online learning formats** across a range of teaching activities with a goal of enhancing the learning opportunities for students

### Theme B: New Programs

McGill will support **creative, innovative, and flexible program development** to meet new priorities, needs of learners of the future, and the changing job markets

### Theme C: Summer Offerings

McGill will **increase offerings during the summer**, with a goal of increasing access, increase efficiency around the use of space and infrastructure, and possible options for increased revenue

## Long-term Recommendations (2+ years)

### Theme D: Experiential Learning

McGill will consider developing a **consistent and intentional approach to experiential learning** across its full range of Academic Programs, in line with the extant commitment to increase student mobility and to “*enhance internship and entrepreneurship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students*” [as per the Strategic Academic Plan].

### Theme E: Responsive to Emerging Needs

McGill will continue to learn, identify and be responsive to emerging societal needs and ensure its future priorities and strategically important third century projects represent the future of education at the University, and across our community. Addressing critical space and resource needs must be done in tandem with the evolution of academic program design and delivery.

# Theme A: Online/Blended Learning: seven recommendations

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1. The University will adopt clear definitions related to course modes, including online and blended learning at McGill.

▶ **See Appendix A**

▶ ***Asynchronous, Blended Learning, Distance Learning, Hybrid/Hyflex Learning, In-Person Learning, Online Learning, Remote Delivery, Synchronous***

2. A workgroup is created to evaluate and align the definitions and approach to consideration of 'credit value' and 'contact hours' across the University.

▶ It is proposed that the Academic Policy Committee develop this workgroup, its terms of reference and composition.

3. Teaching and Learning Services develops a framework for instructors when considering using synchronous or asynchronous approaches for online teaching, including a plan for support to instructors and commitment to required resources.

## **Theme A: Online/Blended Learning (con't)**

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4. Faculties adopt their own guidelines pertaining to conditions under which blended learning in courses require unit/Faculty approval, ensuring that approvals are done at a programmatic/unit level when a course is designed with more than about 15% to less than 50% of the scheduled hours occurring online.

- ▶ 15% is an approximation e.g., 6 scheduled hours in a standard three credit course could be offered online without requiring approvals
- ▶ More than 50% of a course (i.e., 'enriched blended') being offered online is considered a more complete re-design of a course, and requires approvals analogous to a new course proposal

**Faculties may adopt a stricter approach to thresholds or approvals of blended learning in courses.**

## Theme A: Online/Blended Learning (con't)

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5. Hybrid/Hyflex courses may be possible in a limited and specifically designed format, provided there is instructor, Program director/Unit/Faculty approval, and there is appropriate pedagogical and technological support.
  
6. The Academic Policy Committee's Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP) must be notified of any course whose modality of delivery is modified to greater than about 15% of its scheduled hours are offered online, or if a course is offered in hybrid format
  - ▶ This is the process currently in place when a course changes its modality from fully in-person to fully online or vice versa.
  
7. Technological improvements are made to classrooms, and additional support is available for instructors who are teaching online (realized in part through Teaching and Learning Services)

## Theme B: New Programs – two recommendations

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1. Clear definitions of program types be adopted at the University, to ensure consistency and clarity for the community:

- ▶ *See Appendix B*
- ▶ *Blended Program, Modular Degree, Online Program, Program (or Academic Program), Short Program, Stackable Degree, Micro-Credential (non-credit), Workshops (non-credit), Experiential Learning*

2. The Office of the Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Program) refine, improve, and streamline the processes around new program creation to ensure clarity, transparency, and efficiency.

# Theme C: Summer Offerings: two recommendations

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1. Enrolment Services will lead a workgroup to support a cohesive vision and strategy for summer-offerings, including the following considerations:

- ▶ Creating a framework/model for a suite of credit and non-credit summer activities (e.g., bridge programs, single-courses), coordinating closely with the School of Continuing Studies
- ▶ Understanding the scope and coordination for non-credit activities during the summer
- ▶ Resourcing and resource implications

2. The Dean of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, the Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs) and Enrolment Services collaborate to assess opportunities for ensuring non-thesis Masters Programs are designed, whenever possible, to be completed within 12 months, thereby fully using the summer term

## **Long-term recommendations (2+ years)**

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### **Theme D: Experiential Learning**

McGill will consider developing a consistent and intentional approach to experiential learning across its full range of Academic Programs, in line with the extant commitment to increase student mobility and to “*enhance internship and entrepreneurship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students*” [as per the Strategic Academic Plan].

### **Theme E: Responsive to Emerging Needs**

McGill will continue to learn, identify and be responsive to emerging societal needs and ensure its future priorities and strategically important third century projects represent the future of education at the University, and across our community. Addressing critical space and resource needs must be done in tandem with the evolution of academic program design and delivery.

## Next Steps:

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- ▶ Continue to finalize report which will:
  - ▶ Finalize wording on recommendations
  - ▶ Ensure best pedagogical literature supports the recommendations
  - ▶ Be data- and evidence-driven to the extent possible
  - ▶ Summarize fully the extent and scope of consultations and feedback (past and ongoing)
  - ▶ Ensure importance of wellbeing, and consideration of concerns related to workload are highlighted
  - ▶ Link to other key initiatives at the University (e.g., accessibility strategy, student accommodations, implementation of the Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning)
- ▶ Submit final report to the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) before 1 March 2023,
  - ▶ Recommendations pertaining to definitions and approval pathways for blended learning, and definitions of program types returning to Senate before the end of Winter 2023 for approvals