

# UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING

McGill offers students access to a variety of advisors, mentors, and counsellors with different skills, expertise, and levels of authority. To help determine whether you need to speak to a faculty advisor, departmental/school advisor, professor/lecturer, or peer advisor, see Types of Advising and Advisors (p. 1).

## Advising and the University Mission

The Mission Statement of the University expresses the commitment to offer students the *best education available*. An essential component of this is the advising process. Academic advising takes place in many ways and locations at McGill, so it is important that you learn about the different Types of Advising and Advisors and how they can help you reach your goals. You should also consult the advising information provided on your Faculty's website (Contact Information for Faculty and School Student Affairs Offices) and on the Academic Advising website.

## The Role of Student Advising

Your active participation in the advising process is essential for accessing the full range of academic opportunities during your studies. You must be proactive in seeking meetings with various academic advisors, professors, and related administrative units to ensure that you receive the advice you need to formulate a personal plan of study and to meet your academic goals. While advisors are there to provide you with guidance, you are ultimately responsible for meeting your degree or diploma requirements. It is your responsibility to learn the rules and regulations of the University, your faculty, and your program. With your collaboration, your academic advisors can assist you throughout your undergraduate studies.

## University-Wide Regulations

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with University regulations as outlined in the Regulations section.

## Faculty-Specific Regulations

McGill has 12 Faculties, and every student belongs to one of them. When you are admitted to McGill, your offer letter indicates the Faculty, degree, and program to which you have been accepted, and the number of credits you need to complete for your degree.

You should consult the appropriate Faculty section in this publication for Faculty-specific regulations and information pertinent to your degree and program.

## Your Academic Program

You are registered in a **degree**, but for many degrees there are associated programs (a major, minor, major concentration, etc.). For some degrees, such as Bachelor of Engineering, you will typically follow one program (such as Computer Engineering). For others, such as Bachelor of Arts, you will typically follow more than one program (such as a major concentration in English, with a minor concentration in History).

A typical undergraduate degree at McGill is 120–140 credits (four years of full-time study).

- Quebec CEGEP students typically receive 30 credits of Advanced Standing, so they will usually only have a further 90–110 credits (three years of full-time study) to complete. This varies by faculty, so consult your faculty section. In your first year, you will be placed in **U1** (undergraduate year 1).
- Most other students typically have 120–140 credits to complete. This varies by faculty, so consult your faculty section. In your first year, you will be placed in **U0** (undergraduate year 0), which is often referred to as your Freshman /Foundation year.
- Many students at McGill come with other forms of Advanced Standing (International Baccalaureate, French Baccalaureate, advanced placement exams, or students admitted from other universities as transfer students). If this is your case, you will receive information during the admissions process.

**Note:** Students given Advanced Standing who nevertheless wish to complete 120 McGill credits may be allowed to do so; for full details, see Advanced Standing Transfer Credits.

You will find **program requirements** in your faculty section or in departmental sections within a faculty. In some cases, you may pursue one of your programs in a department outside your faculty. For example, if you are enrolled in a Bachelor of Commerce, but are pursuing a minor concentration in Italian Civilization, you would consult the Desautels Faculty of Management section for the B.Com. requirements, and the Italian Studies department section, under the Faculty of Arts, for the Italian Civilization program requirements.

### Important things to know about your academic program:

- The number of credits needed to complete your academic program or programs and, ultimately, your degree. Typically, three credits correspond to a one-term course, but there are many variations; for more information, see Credit System.
- For information about **required**, **complementary**, and **elective courses**, see Course Terminology and Courses Taken under the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Option.
- Some departments or programs may provide you with a **recommended list** of courses (or streams), so that you know the typical term-by-term course pattern. There may also be a program guide or handbook available; you can ask your departmental or program advisor about this.

For more assistance in understanding program requirements, and for a list of advisors on both Downtown and Macdonald campuses, see the Faculties website.

While at McGill, you have access to academic advisors who have different skills, expertise, and levels of authority. Your academic advisors can help you succeed academically by providing timely, accurate, and coherent information about University regulations and program requirements and by working, as appropriate, with other University services and resources to help support you throughout your degree. All conversations with your academic advisors are confidential. The main types of advisors are described below. You should refer to your faculty's section of this publication for additional advising information specific to your degree program and to the Advising website for more general information. Note that some academic

matters require approval of more than one advisor, e.g., the faculty advisor and the department/school academic advisor.

**Faculty Advisors** are normally located in the Student Affairs Office of each faculty and are available throughout the calendar year. You can refer to the Advisor Directory for more information.

Faculty advisors:

- are experts in the rules, regulations, and requirements pertaining to specific degree programs;
- provide ongoing advice and guidance on program selection, course registration, credit load, deadlines, and majors and minors;
- communicate with other advisors within the University and, with your permission, serve as a direct link to other University resources;
- may assist you in planning for, and applying to, university exchange programs and may also provide, or direct you to, information about scholarships, awards, research fellowships, and opportunities within a given field;
- are a valuable source of information about the various resources available at McGill;
- offer support, guidance, and appropriate referrals to help you manage academic situations during periods of personal, financial, or medical difficulties, and work with you to identify various possibilities and strategies for making informed decisions.

**Department/School Academic Advisors** are normally located close to the offices of professors in your program and may only be available during specific times of the year (e.g., prior to registration for the next session or during the add/drop period) or during regularly scheduled office hours. If you are completing a major or minor in more than one unit, you will likely have an advisor in each unit. The departmental academic advisor may be either a professor or a member of the administrative staff. You should contact your department's administrative office to determine the identity and availability of your academic advisor. You should check your progress with your departmental academic advisor from time to time—and certainly before your final year.

Departmental academic advisors:

- guide you through course selection to meet the subject matter requirements of the major or minor;
- consider requests for course equivalencies, recommend prior approval for inter-university transfer credits, or explain the rationale for the design of a department/school program;
- may assist you in planning for, and applying to, university exchange programs, and may also provide, or direct you to, information about scholarships, awards, research fellowships, and opportunities within a given field;
- are a valuable source of information about the various resources available at McGill;
- can provide support, guidance, and appropriate referrals if you experience academic or personal difficulties while studying at McGill;
- are often responsible for confirming that you have met major or minor program requirements for graduation.

**Professors/Lecturers** may act in a voluntary capacity to mentor you as you progress through your program. The faculty advisor or department/

school academic advisor may be able to help you identify a good resource person in your program.

Professors/lecturers:

- may provide advice on the latest trends in a specific field of study and make recommendations on related advanced readings;
- may discuss opportunities for a student research experience and help you connect with a professor or lecturer who best suits your interests or learning style;
- refer you back to the faculty advisor or departmental academic advisor for signatures and permission related to program requirements.

**Peer Advisors** are students who have been trained by faculty advisors or department/school academic advisors. They normally offer drop-in hours for advice on University life and will help you find the information you need in this publication or through other University resources. Peer advisors are only available in some faculties or departments.

## Related Resources

For a full list of services available to undergraduate students, please refer to Student Services – Downtown Campus and Student Services – Macdonald Campus.

**Ask an Advisor** is an advising and referral resource for undergraduate students in all faculties. If you don't know who to contact with your advising questions or what your next step should be, Ask an Advisor can help by sending you to the right person or place the first time.

**Campus Life & Engagement (CL&E)** (Brown Student Services Building) can help new students navigate their way through this publication and the information provided to new students; see [mcgill.ca/accepted](http://mcgill.ca/accepted) and [mcgill.ca/getready](http://mcgill.ca/getready). The CL&E staff are always available to provide advice and referrals to the many support mechanisms at McGill.

**The Student Wellness Hub** (Brown Student Services Building) has professional counsellors, social workers, and psychologists who are available to discuss personal, academic, and career goals or problems. They provide individual counselling, therapy, psychoeducational workshops, and crisis intervention. Drop-in services are available. Additionally, **Local Wellness Advisors** can be accessed throughout faculties and services across campus, and they offer support, information, and resources tailored to each faculty and/or student population.

**Career Planning Service (CaPS)** (Brown Student Services Building) provides career education, guidance, and individual advising to help you in your search for permanent, part-time, or summer jobs and internships.

**Service Point** (3415 McTavish Street, Montreal QC H3A 0C8; 514-398-7878) is the student-facing customer-service arm of Enrolment Services, which provides administrative services and assistance related to official documents, student records, tuition and fees, and student exchanges.

On the Macdonald Campus, information is provided by the **Student Affairs Office**, Laird Hall, Room 106.

**The WELL Office** provides services to students enrolled in Nursing, Physical and Occupational Therapy, and Communications Sciences and Disorders programs.

**The Office of Medical Learner Affairs** offers support to UGME and PGME students.