

NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM

**Student Guide
2020-2021**



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This document is not intended to replicate or modify the information found in the [School of Graduate Studies \(SGS\) Calendar](#). If there is any discrepancy between this document and the SGS Calendar, then the School of Graduate Studies Calendar shall prevail. Students and faculty are encouraged to look at the [SGS Calendar](#) for information about:

- Graduate study at McMaster;
- General regulations of the School of Graduate Studies;
- University regulations;
- Graduate fees and financial assistance;
- University regulations affecting graduate students;
- University services;
- Fellowships, scholarships, bursaries and other awards;
- University governing bodies;
- Student appeals; and
- Degree programs (including degree requirements).

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR AND ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM

McMaster University is renowned for innovative research and teaching in different fields. Nowhere is this more evident than in the neuroscience graduate program. Neuroscience has been defined as one of the last frontiers of knowledge. To understand the emergent properties of nervous systems, and to decipher how the mind emerges from the brain and further how it interacts with other minds is one of the most important challenges of the 21st Century. MiNDS (the McMaster Integrative Discovery & Study) has been an informal “nick-name” for our program, which is officially known as the Neuroscience Graduate Program.

More than 80 faculty members – representing 4 Faculties and 15 departments from across campus – collaborated to develop McMaster's Neuroscience Graduate Program, a program designed to break through conventional boundaries that inhibit leading-edge, interdisciplinary research and study.

McMaster's Neuroscience Graduate program covers a broad spectrum of neuroscience, encompassing cellular/molecular, clinical/health, cognitive, computational, neurotechnological, systems, and behavioural approaches.

Our Program connects students with an internationally recognized faculty of researchers and scholars, working within a closely knit, resource-rich research environment.

Current research projects within the faculty are aimed at improving human health and discovery in areas such as neural development, behavioural genetics, perception, pain, motor learning, vision, hearing, cancer, Alzheimer's, autism, Parkinson's, depression, bipolar disorder, dementia, anxiety, and neurotechnology.

*Dr. Flavio Kapczinski – Director
Dr. Deda Gillespie – Associate Director
Neuroscience Graduate Program*

1.0.0. CONTACT INFORMATION



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STUDENTS REPRESENTATION:

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2.0.0. PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

It is expected that members of the Neuroscience Graduate program will pursue their research activities in a manner consistent with the highest standards of ethical and scientific practice. The policies and guidelines on conduct and ethics in use at McMaster University can be found in the [Student Code of Conduct](#), [McMaster Research Integrity Policy](#), [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [McMaster University Code of Research Ethics](#). For Health Sciences graduate students, a supplementary guideline, [Professional Behaviour Code of Conduct for Learners](#), applies to learners in health care professions and research. This guideline outlines the professional behaviours in all academic and clinical settings that must be understood and followed. Students are encouraged to read these documents and become familiar with the responsibilities of graduate students described in these documents.

3.0.0. REGISTRATION

All students are required to [register](#) in MOSAIC annually during the [on-time registration period](#) listed in the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#). Students who do not complete their registration on time will be charged a late fee.

To complete your [registration](#) you will need to add at least one course (or a placeholder) in each term. The course catalog can be accessed via the student center in MOSAIC, which has a complete list of available courses offered for the current academic year. If you are not taking any academic courses in a term, you will need to add a 'placeholder'. There are two different placeholder courses:

- SGS 700 – full time students
- SGS 701 – part time students

If you do not add a course in each term – you will not have completed your registration.

Tuition Fees

Please visit the [Student Accounts website](#) for information about fees and tuition.

4.0.0. GRADUATE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

4.1.0. SGS #101 AND SGS #201

All new Graduate Students are required to take two courses:

- SGS 101-- Academic Research Integrity and Ethics
- SGS 201—Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

These courses must be completed during the first month at McMaster. A graduate degree at McMaster University cannot be obtained without successfully passing these courses.

4.2.0. 700 LEVEL NEUROSCIENCE

All students (MSc & PhD) are required to take the 700 level Neuroscience course *The Nervous System* in the first year. This course covers the breadth of the field of Neuroscience in a series of modules. Different instructors contribute to teaching the modules, and a course coordinator directs the course. Neuroscience is a very broad discipline covering topics from molecular biology, to the development of neuroprosthetics, to new treatments for neurologic and psychiatric disorders, and this course provides an introduction to various areas. The goal of this course is to present current theories and research from different areas of Neuroscience research that will prepare students for more advanced studies in Neuroscience.

4.3.0. PHD. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

PhD students are required to take a minimum of 1 additional one-term (3 unit) 700 level course beyond *The Nervous System* from the list of [Neuroscience courses on the Neuroscience Program website](#). For course descriptions please refer to [the Graduate Calendar](#). Please note that not all courses are offered every year. To enroll in most graduate courses, you will need the permission of the instructor and/or the department offering the course. When deemed appropriate, they (the department or program) can then add a requisite to your record so that you are able to sign up for the course in MOSAIC. You will also need approval from your supervisory committee before registering for any additional courses.

4.4.0. ORIENTATION SESSIONS AND HEALTH & SAFETY COURSES

We want to make sure you're working safely in our laboratories and offices. In the Neuroscience Graduate Program, you will have access to several different buildings and several different laboratories. Once registered, you must complete the following minimal [safety training courses](#) either [in class or on-line](#) before coming to campus:

- WHMIS
- ASBESTOS AWARENESS
- ERGONOMICS
- FIRE SAFETY
- SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS
- VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE
- COVID 19 AWARENESS (new in 2020)

Additional Safety Training is required in certain laboratories and for certain work environments. Please check with your supervisor to find out what further training courses are required. All Health and Safety Training at McMaster is coordinated by the [Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Support Services \(EOHSS\)](#) and the [FHS Safety Office](#). You can find additional training courses offered by clicking on these links. The specific training you need to complete will depend on your lab and Supervisor.

A job hazard analysis (JHA) is required for all procedures that could result in a major loss; this JHA must be documented and reviewed with the worker. In order to complete this task, EOHSS has created a Job Hazard Analysis Online Tool. [The online tool and directions on how to complete your Job Hazard Analysis can be found here!](#) Please ask your direct supervisor for the list of Major Hazards in your lab if there are any and complete this task with your supervisor if required.

Once you have completed the on-line training, please submit a screen shot (from Mosaic) of your training summary (these will show as complete ~24 hours after you have taken the courses) via email to the [Program Administrator](#).

5.0.0. SEMINAR REQUIREMENT

5.1.0. JOURNAL CLUB AND COLLOQUIA

Each month the Neuroscience Graduate Program invites established researchers to visit and discuss their work on various topics in neuroscience in the Neuroscience Colloquium series. The week before the colloquium, students discuss relevant publications in a “Meeting of the MiNDS” journal club. The papers and discussion questions are released ahead of the meeting via e-mail. Students are required to attend the Colloquia, journal club and all associated meetings.

5.2.0. SYMPOSIA

Each year, the Neuroscience Graduate Program holds a themed symposium. Distinguished speakers are invited to give talks in their field of expertise, and students are invited to take part in a poster presentation session. Details are released in advance of the meeting.

6.0.0. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Full Time students in the Neuroscience Graduate Program receive financial support in the form of Scholarships as well as a possible TA or RA in Lieu of TA position.

Students in the program are expected to apply to any external scholarships for which they are eligible each year. Some of the major external awards include OGS, NSERC and CIHR. Students are advised to look into the award deadlines at the beginning of each year. A list of additional scholarships can be found on the [SGS website](#).

Students may also apply for travel awards to attend conferences, work/study and research travel experiences. Please visit the [SGS website](#) for further information, including the Graduate Students’ Association travel awards.

The Neuroscience Graduate Program also offers travel awards each year that must be matched by your supervisor. Please answer all of the questions on the application (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GHG6PIB>) when applying for a program travel award. Regular attendance (80%) at Colloquium, Journal Club and Seminar Series talks is required to qualify for all internal awards.

7.0.0. TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Most Neuroscience Graduate Program students are assigned a 1/2 TA (130 hours/year). Prior to the start of the academic year, an email from the program administrator will prompt you to select preferences for your TAship from a given list. TA positions will then be assigned to each graduate student. Specific TA duties will be assigned by the faculty member responsible for that course. Students will be paid for their TAship bi-weekly during the months they are employed as a TA. [You can Access the TA collective agreement here.](#)

8.0.0. CUPE AND GSA HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

8.1.0. CUPE DENTAL PLAN

If you hold a Teaching/Research Assistantship, you are a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 3906, Unit 1. Union dues will be deducted from your TA pay.

Your Dental plan information can be accessed on [the CUPE 3906 website](#).

For instructions on opting-out of the Dental Plan or for obtaining family coverage please visit the [CUPE website](#) or office.

8.2.0. GSA HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

The McMaster [GSA Health Plan](#) provides students with health benefits not covered by OHIP or your CUPE coverage. All full-time Graduate students are automatically enrolled in the plan and pay an annual premium.

9.0.0. SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

The student's Supervisor and Supervisory Committee provide evaluation, leadership, and guidance to the student throughout their time in the program. Each Neuroscience Graduate Student is required to meet with their supervisory committee within the first six months of entry into the program. The committee must be approved by the Program Director or Associate Director before scheduling the first meeting.

9.1.0. THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Each student is responsible for working with their supervisor to select and organize the supervisory committee. The committee must include the student's supervisor and two additional members of [The Neuroscience Graduate Program](#). With permission, the student may add one additional committee member from outside the program who has special or significant expertise to support the student. Committee members are generally selected based on their ability to effectively support and enhance the student's research and/or progress through the program. All committee membership must be approved by the Program Director or Associate Director before the first meeting. Any changes to this committee must also be approved in advance by the Program Director or Associate Director.

9.2.0. SUPERVISORY MEETINGS

Once the supervisory committee has been selected and approved, the student must organise a formal meeting with their committee. Each Neuroscience Graduate Student is required to meet with their supervisory committee within the first six months of their entry into the program. Following this meeting, each student is required to meet with their supervisory committee at least every twelve months, unless the committee deems more frequent meetings beneficial or necessary.

Note:

- *It is the student's responsibility to organize and coordinate a suitable date, time, and location so that all of the members of their committee can attend supervisory committee meetings.*
- *This is a formal meeting. The meeting consists of a well-prepared presentation, followed by a question-and-answer period.*
- *At least two days before the meeting, the student must send to their supervisor and committee a Committee Meeting Report outlining progress to date and indicating what will be covered in the meeting.*

10.0.0. COMBINED PHD PROGRAMS

The Neuroscience Graduate Program is a flexible, open program that allows its students to complete their PhD training in a variety of ways, including through combined degrees.

10.1.0. COMBINED MD/PHD PROGRAM

Students wishing to study Medicine at McMaster have the opportunity to complete a combined MD/PhD through the Neuroscience Graduate Program. The MD/PhD program is run through the Faculty of Health Sciences. Students must be accepted into the MD program in order to be eligible. In brief, students enrolled in this program complete the requirements for MD and PhD separately over the span of 6-7 years. Please note that not all Neuroscience Graduate supervisors accept students for enrolment in the MD/PhD program. For up to date information about admissions, expectations and timelines please go to:

<http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/mdphd/>

10.2.0. OTHER COMBINED DEGREES

Neuroscience Graduate Students are allowed to pursue other combined degrees (e.g., MBA and PhD). It is important they be aware of the following:

1. The MD/PhD program is the only combined program recognized by the University. Enrolling in other programs will require that you complete the requirements for *both* your PhD and other degree concurrently. You must remain enrolled as a full-time Neuroscience Graduate Student throughout this process. The concurrent degree will be completed in a part-time capacity.
2. Completing two degrees concurrently requires a high degree of organization and strong academic skills. Students are expected to complete all the administrative work and to schedule their time accordingly in order to complete degree requirements for both programs.
3. Before attempting to complete a concurrent degree, a student must consult their supervisor. Not all supervisors are willing to support students who are unable to devote full time to their PhD studies, in part because not all projects are compatible with such requests. The request must also be approved by the Program Director.

11.0.0. TRANSFER FROM THE MSC TO PHD PROGRAM

Students who wish to transfer to the PhD program without completing their Master's degree are encouraged to do so between **12-20 months** of starting the program. The procedure requires a written report, an oral presentation of the Master's research work, and an outline of the planned PhD research. To initiate a transfer to PhD:

- 1) The student should discuss the prospect of transferring to the PhD with their supervisor and their supervisory committee members.
- 2) The student's supervisor may request that the supervisory committee meet to discuss the work done so far in the MSc program and what is required to be done before a transfer meeting can occur.
- 3) Once the supervisor and the committee agree to a transfer meeting, the student advises the Neuroscience Graduate Program of their intention to transfer to the PhD stream.
- 4) At least one week before the transfer meeting, the student must submit a transfer report to their supervisory committee. The report is written in the format of a Journal of Neuroscience manuscript (see [https://www.jneurosci.org/content/information-authors - preparing_a_manuscript](https://www.jneurosci.org/content/information-authors-preparing_a_manuscript).) The report should cover the work completed to date in the MSc, as well as information on the research that the student plans to do in the PhD program.
- 5) The student will prepare a 15-20 minute presentation on the work completed to date in the MSc program and the work that is to be done for the PhD. Typically, PhD transfer meetings are scheduled for 1 ½ hours to allow time for the presentation, questions and discussion.
- 6) The transfer meeting can have one of several outcomes :
 - a. The candidate is permitted to transfer to the PhD program without completing their Masters.
 - b. The candidate is asked to schedule another transfer meeting after a few months of further research.

- c. The candidate can proceed to the PhD program after completing the MSc.
 - d. The candidate is invited to complete the MSc only.
- 7) The student must submit completed/signed Transfer Forms (provided by the program administrator) and a copy of the Transfer report written by the student.

The candidate must submit the Transfer Forms, and a PDF of the written transfer report to the Neuroscience Graduate Program administrator immediately following the meeting.

12.0.0. PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

All PhD candidates must attempt their comprehensive examination within 20 months of beginning the PhD degree and must have successfully passed the comprehensive examination by 24 months. The comprehensive requirement is designed to examine the student's ability to:

- define a major question in neuroscience research
- evaluate the research literature critically
- design experiments to address the research question

The student, in consultation with their supervisory committee, selects an area of concentration. Note that although this area may be relevant to the student's thesis work, the comprehensive topic must differ enough from the thesis project – both conceptually and methodologically – to stretch the student in (a) new direction(s).

The student then writes a grant-style research application similar to a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) operating/project grant application.

Students are encouraged to meet with their comprehensive exam committee to discuss the scope of the grant proposal and to review the reading list. The student will submit the written grant proposal and will be examined orally on the proposal, as well as on their knowledge in the area of concentration.

Comprehensive committee members are encouraged to mentor the student during the examination process by providing feedback about the grant proposal and

readings that the student should be familiar with, and by discussing the student's ideas.

The committee must include:

- the student's thesis supervisor (non-voting member & Chair),
- one member from the student's Supervisory committee (must be a Neuroscience Graduate Program faculty member),
- two additional members from the [Neuroscience Graduate Program faculty](#).

When a student is co-supervised, only one supervisor will participate in an official capacity on the comprehensive committee as the Chair. The Chair's role is to adjudicate the oral component of the examination, support the student in developing the topic for the comprehensive examination, and ensure that the student has prepared for the oral exam.

The written proposal, oral presentation, and answers to questions will be evaluated within the framework of the 3 objectives of the comprehensive examinations (ability to define a major research question; evaluate the literature; design experiments to address the research question).

The student's performance on each component (written proposal, oral presentation (20 minutes), answers to questions) and the overall comprehensive will be judged as:

- Pass with Distinction,
- Pass,
- or Fail.

Students who fail the overall evaluation will be given a second opportunity to take the comprehensive exam. Please refer to the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#) for further information.

The following steps outline the process involved in undertaking the comprehensive examination.

1. The student, in consultation with the supervisor, notifies the Program of which time period the examination will be taken.
2. The student, in consultation with the supervisory committee, selects a topic for the grant proposal and identifies possible examiners.

3. The student registers for the comprehensive examination by completing and submitting the [comprehensive examination survey](#). Once the topic and committee have been approved, the student has up to 6 weeks to prepare the written grant proposal (CIHR format: 10 pages, excluding the one-page summary, references and figures).
4. The student delivers a copy of the grant proposal (hard copy or digital format, as preferred by individual members) to each member of the examining committee 1 week before the oral examination date.
5. Prior to the oral exam, all Examiners assess the written grant proposal by completing the evaluation form.
6. The student presents and defends the grant proposal to the Comprehensive Examination committee.
7. The Examination Chair informs the student verbally of the result of the examination and sends the original signed evaluation form to the Program Administrator.

12.1.0. ORAL PRESENTATION

In the oral component of the comprehensive examination, the student is expected to

- provide reasoned arguments in support of his/her interpretation of the scientific area under study
- demonstrate his/her ability to use the information acquired to formulate a hypothesis
- develop an experimental plan that addresses the hypothesis,
- discuss and address weaknesses and strengths of the experimental approach

12.2.0. EVALUATING THE COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL, PRESENTATION, AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The information provided to committee members to evaluate the student can be found [here](#).

13.0.0. MSC THESIS AND DEFENCE

The thesis is a coherent document that provides a complete, detailed, and systematic account of the student's research. Ultimately, the student's supervisory committee will approve the writing style and format that is appropriate for the thesis. However, a good starting point is described by the [School of Graduate Studies](#). Please consult the [Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses](#).

The following points are meant to briefly summarize the requirements for the MSc thesis and oral defence. The student is encouraged to review additional guidelines set by The School of Graduate Studies, the supervisory committee, and [The School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#). Effective Jan 1 2021, all Masters Thesis must be checked in [Urkund](#) before the Thesis can be shared with the examining committee. Please review [the Research Plagiarism Checking Policy found here](#).

13.1.0. PERMISSION TO WRITE

A supervisory committee meeting is required to receive permission to write a Master's thesis. It is therefore important for the student to meet with the committee members to determine if there is enough data collected to produce the thesis. If the committee agrees that the student has met the objectives of the thesis work, the student may begin to shift focus from data collection to preparation of the thesis for defence.

13.2.0. APPROVAL OF THESIS BY SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE AND SUBMISSION TO SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

To meet the requirements for a Master's degree, the thesis must be submitted by the student to the graduate program at least 2 weeks prior to the defense either in an electronic form or as a hard copy. The student should submit the first completed draft to the supervisor for critical comments. After revision, the student will submit a complete version to the individual supervisory committee members who will act as examiners and to the program administrator. The final draft must be submitted no later than the date specified in the 'Sessional Dates' section of the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#) for the degree to be recognized at the appropriate convocation.

13.3.0. ORAL THESIS DEFENCE

An oral presentation describing the student's Master's research will be made to a committee of at least 3 faculty members approved by the Director or Associate Director. This examination committee, together with a Chair assigned by the program, will constitute the supervisory committee. When the thesis is approved for defence, the student will arrange the time and place of the oral examination, per the availabilities of the examination committee, and will notify the program administrator of the time and place so that a Chair can be found for the meeting (at least 2 weeks prior to set date). The examination will consist of an oral overview of the thesis given by the student (15 - 20 minutes), followed by a series of questions asked by the members of the Examination Committee. All examiners are expected to ask at least one relevant question. At the end of the defence, the Examination Committee will consider the student's performance in a closed session. The Chair will then call the student into the room to give the committee's decision. In the event that a re-examination is necessary, the examination committee will remain the same.

13.4.0. CHANGES TO THESIS DOCUMENT

After a successful defence, the Chair of the examination committee will inform the student of any changes required by the examiners. The Chair will initial and give the student's supervisor a form [the "Final Thesis Submission Sheet"] indicating whether the thesis requires a) no changes, b) minor changes or c) major changes. After any/all required changes have been made, the supervisor (if minor changes are required) or the full committee (if major changes are required) will sign the form and give it to the student for submission to SGS.

13.5.0. SUBMISSION OF THESIS

Candidates who have successfully completed their oral defence and made all required revisions must file an electronic version of their final thesis to MacSphere. They must also deliver the signed Final Thesis Submission Form and License to McMaster to the Program Administrator. The thesis will then be officially published. The student will receive an email confirming the official date of publication of the thesis.

14.0.0. PHD THESIS AND DEFENCE

The thesis is a comprehensive document in electronic format (e-thesis), that provides a detailed account of the student's research. Please consult [The School of Graduate Studies website](#) for instructions on preparation of the thesis and detailed procedures for the defence. Individuals are encouraged to review additional guidelines set forth by The School of Graduate Studies, including [The School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#). Effective Jan 1 2021, all PhD Thesis must be checked in [Urkund](#) for plagiarism before the Thesis can be shared with the examining committee or external reviewer. Please review [the Research Plagiarism Checking Policy found here](#).

14.1.0. PERMISSION TO WRITE

A formal supervisory committee meeting is required to obtain permission to write the thesis. Although students are encouraged to start writing components of their thesis earlier in their study period, a supervisory committee meeting is required to determine whether enough data have been collected to allow preparation of a PhD thesis. The purpose of the committee meeting prior to the defence is to transition from a focus on collecting data to preparing the thesis for defence. A 2/3 majority decision of the committee is required for the student to be given permission to prepare the thesis for defence.

14.2.0. APPROVAL OF THESIS BY SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE AND SUBMISSION TO SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

A majority of the student's supervisory committee must approve the thesis before it can proceed to an oral defence. Once majority approval is received, the student should submit a request to defend and indicate preferred thesis defence dates as per [SGS defence guidelines](#).

14.3.0. SUBMISSION OF THESIS

The student must upload the final revised thesis to MacSphere after a successful defence (and revisions, if applicable). The thesis will then be officially published. The student will receive an email confirming the official date of publication of the thesis.

15.0.0. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Students in the Neuroscience Graduate Program have access to a variety of career opportunities. The Neuroscience Graduate Program actively alerts and encourages students to take advantage of various career opportunities and related activities. McMaster University is home to a graduate student support that enables students to make the most out of their graduate degree.

Below is a list of some of the services available to Graduate Students. Please refer to the websites listed for more information.

15.1.0. OSCARPLUS

[OSCARplus](#), McMaster University's Online Career Portal, is managed collaboratively across all five career centres on-campus to provide support for student career development, recruitment and experiential education.

The 5 centres include:

Student Success Centre

Centre for Business Career Development

Engineering Co-op and Career Services

Faculty of Social Sciences, Experiential Education

Science Career and Co-operative Education

15.2.0. STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE

Your success is at the core of the services and programs offered by [the Student Success Centre](#) (studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca) at McMaster University. Our long-standing commitment will support you from the time you accept your offer of admission up to 5 years after graduation in the areas of student orientation, academic skills, leadership, service-learning, volunteerism, educational planning, employment and career transition.

15.3.0. MCMASTER ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

[Mac 10](#) connects you with the resources to help you succeed professionally and the opportunities to engage in lifelong learning - and have a little fun, too! Mac10 is a program geared to alumni, but many of the events are open to current McMaster graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

15.4.0. GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE

Visit [the School of Graduate Studies' Career and Professional Development Page](#) to find academic, public or private sector job boards and career support, networking, etc.

15.5.0. MACPHERSON INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

[The MacPherson Institute](#) is designed to enable student success in teaching and learning. Whether you'd like to discuss an idea for the classroom, are keen to adopt learning technologies or have an interest in researching your teaching and learning, they have a wide variety of pedagogical and technical resources, as well as friendly faces, to help.

15.6.0. MITACS (OFF-CAMPUS PARTNER)

[Mitacs](#) is a national, non-profit research organization that offers unique research and training programs to help develop the next generation of innovators – with vital scientific and business skills. McMaster's Graduate Studies works closely with Mitacs to bring quality top-quality programming to Graduate Students.

16.0.0. STUDENTS OF MiNDS ASSOCIATION (SOMA)

The Students of MiNDS Association (SOMA) is a student organization founded in 2012 that aims to enrich student life, enhance the academic experience, and provide community outreach opportunities to students in the Neuroscience Graduate program.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the program, students are in different locations of McMaster University, the Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton family of hospitals. The Neuroscience Graduate program also has a student body with diverse interests in the neuroscience field. SOMA acts to bring these students together and provide a venue for more interaction as well as foster communication and collaboration with graduate programs beyond Neuroscience.

SOMA aims to increase collaboration and advance community by providing events and services that include:

- Neuroscience Graduate Program orientation event
- Social events (e.g., games night, paint night, holiday socials, hikes, yoga)
- Professional development (C.V. review, peer mentoring etc)
- Charity fundraising/awareness events
- Social on-line communication (via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)
- Reporting awards, abstracts and conference deadlines

Our goal is to enrich the McMaster graduate student experience through events and programming geared towards the needs and wants of the Neuroscience Graduate Program student body. To achieve this, we have 3 areas of focus:

- 1) Social enrichment
- 2) Academic enrichment
- 3) Community outreach

Our core values are those of collaboration, cooperation, and communication. The strength of our program is the diversity of the students and faculty across different departments and areas of research. By working together, we can bring new insight into our research questions and come up with novel solutions.

As SOMA events thrive on student engagement, we hope to have as many students actively participating as possible. If you have any questions or would like to help with upcoming events, the current SOMA presidents can be contacted at soma@mcmaster.ca.

17.0.0. FAQ

17.1.0. PARKING

McMaster has a variety of parking options available for students and visitors. Visit <http://parking.mcmaster.ca/> for more information.

17.2.0. GRADUATE STUDENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

Refer to [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#) and [website](#).

17.3.0. OTHER MCMASTER POLICIES

McMaster Copyright Policy

Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Harassment Policy

17.4.0. WHOM TO ASK FOR HELP:

17.4.1. ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS:

All administrative questions about the program can be directed to the program administrator. She can be reached directly via email at smurphy@mcmaster.ca.

17.4.2. FINANCIAL QUESTIONS:

Your pay as a graduate student will fluctuate throughout the year, depending on your T.A. hours, scholarships and status (i.e., MSc vs. PhD). If you suspect that there is an error in your pay, you should access your account information through your student account in MOSAIC and then contact the program administrator and/or [Student Accounts and Cashier's office](#) or [School of Graduate Studies payroll](#) directly. Be sure to include your name and your student number in all email inquiries.

17.4.3. ACADEMIC QUESTIONS:

Your supervisor is the best resource for all of your academic questions. Do not hesitate to approach your supervisor for academic clarification, guidance and advice. Issues regarding supervision are to be directed to the Program Director or Associate Director.

17.4.4. STUDENT LIFE QUESTIONS:

[SOMA](#) is your best resource for questions about student life, extra-curricular activities, housing, and the City of Hamilton in general. Our students come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. If you have specific questions, SOMA can help connect you with a senior student who can answer your questions.

17.4.5. ADVISING AND COUNSELLING SERVICES:

[The Student Wellness Centre](#)

[Student Accessibility Services](#)

[The Ombuds Office](#)

[The Chaplaincy Centre](#)