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EMGSS New Students' Guide

2020-2021

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welcome home

Dear New EXMD Students,

Congratulations on your admission to McGill University, and a warm welcome to the Division of Experimental Medicine! You are learning from a faculty of over 200 trailblazing scientists whose research push the cutting edge of fields ranging from bioethics to infectious diseases. You are studying with a cohort of peers comprising of over 300 talented young student scientists coming from all over the world. You have worked hard to gain admission into a competitive program, and you're only just getting started. Whether you're with us for two years or seven, we have no doubt you'll emerge from the program more curious, brilliant, and skilled than ever.

While COVID-19 has upended life across the globe, we are committed to supporting you throughout your graduate studies here at McGill. We are adapting our events and conferences for online formats, and designing them to be informative, inclusive, and supportive. We are thrilled to have you along on this journey to discover, inspire, and challenge yourself in ways unimaginable. Welcome to the family.

Yours,
EMGSS

emgss council

At Your Service

The Experimental Medicine Graduate Students' Society (EMGSS) is composed of a Council that works to serve its Membership - you. Our mission is to promote and defend the rights, welfare, and interests of its members, and to enhance their educational, social, cultural, and environmental conditions. The 2020-2021 Council members are proud to serve you.



*Juan-Carlos Padilla
President*



*Amelia Martinez Villarreal
VP Academic*



*Sepideh Mikaeeli
VP Finance*



*Harmehr Sekhon
VP Administration*



*Owen Dunkley
VP External*



*Dilhan Perera
VP Internal*



*Katie Bozek
VP Communications*



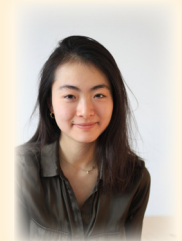
*Noelia Azalde Garcia
VP Social*



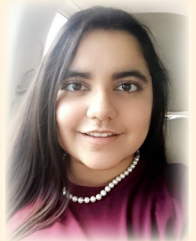
*Dora Xiong
VP Marketing*



*Diana Di Iorio
PGSS Councillor*



*Michelle Chen
PGSS Councillor*



*Kerman Sekhon
Health, Wellness, Equity
& Diversity Rep*



*Will Brothers
LDI Rep*



*Jennifer Huxam
GCRC Rep*



*Nazila Hassanabadi
MUHC Glen Site Rep*

EMGSS Spotlight

Every month, EMGSS shines a spotlight on students in Experimental Medicine who have achieved exciting advancements in their career. Have you or someone you know received an award, scholarship, published an article, graduated, found a job and/or accomplished something worth celebrating? Let us know by sending an email to our [VP Marketing](#) or message us on social media!

Clothing Store

Excited about EXMD but words just can't do your passion justice? Let your clothes do the talking! The EMGSS clothing catalogue has your options for sweaters, hoodies, hats, and pants covered. Check out our current catalogue, pick out your favourite piece (or pieces - we won't hold you back!), then keep your eyes out for a Listserv announcement about placing orders.

<https://emgss.org/clothing>

Connect With Us!

Keep up to date with us on our social media platforms! Check us out on:

Our website: <https://emgss.org/>

Instagram: [@social.emgss](#)

Twitter: [@McGillEMGSS](#)

Facebook (page): <https://www.facebook.com/EMGSS/>

Facebook (group): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/679284572935437/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/emgss/?-originalSubdomain=ca>

get involved

PGSS Fall Orientation

Starting graduate studies can be a daunting step, especially if you are new to Montreal and McGill. To help you transition into your studies at McGill, your Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) has organized an Orientation that runs throughout September. Check out the calendar below for upcoming events! All times are in EST.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
			Virtual Trivia Night (7:30PM)	
	1	2	3	4
Innovation Made at McGill - Panel (4PM)	PGSS Health & Dental Plan Info Session (11AM)		LICM Know Your Rights Info Session (11AM)	
7	8	9	Virtual Board Games Night (6PM)	11
	PGSS Health & Dental Plan Info Session (5PM)	Virtual Baking Workshop (11AM)	EXMD New Student Orientation*	Outdoor Yoga (5PM)
14	Blue Cross Health Insurance Sessions with ISS (6PM)	Wellness Night (6PM)	LICM Know Your Rights Info Session (5:30PM)	Virtual Escape Room (6PM)
	15	16	Trivia Night with MORSL (7:30PM)	18
	Mount Royale Mountain Hike (4PM)	Mount Royale Mountain Hike (9AM)		
21	Movie Night (6PM)	Divestment from Fossil Fuels: A Discussion (5:30PM)	25	26

*EMGSS exclusive

For more details and registration, please visit <https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en/orientation-2020>

20th Annual McGill Biomedical Graduate Conference (AMBGC)

Date: **October 21, 2020**

Abstract submission deadline: **September 30, 2020**

Registration: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScX-NOxfNSUXi80x-AIkDGY1hZd4EVFr7mh7-rHCiuVED0YzBQ/viewform>

For the past 19 years, EMGSS has had the honour of organizing the Annual McGill Biomedical Graduate Conference (AMBGC). Over these years, this award-winning conference has grown to be one of the largest 100% student-led conferences in Canada. Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, this one-day conference has remained completely free to all attendees. The EMGSS Executive Council is proud to be hosting our 20th anniversary conference in Fall 2020! Prepare for a full day of poster sessions, talks by your peers from the many areas of research within Experimental Medicine as well as an exciting Keynote Lecture delivered by Dr. Elaine Fuchs.



Technical Seminar Series

Date: **September 22, 2020**

Time: **12-1 PM (EST); Zoom link to follow.**

Over the years, EMGSS has collaborated with the Graduate Association of Pharmacology and Therapeutics Students (GAPTS) and the Graduate Association of Physiology (GAP) to bring you the Technical Seminar Series. This long-standing series focuses on experimental methods used in the lab and features talks from EXMD students and post-docs. If you are interested in sharing a method you regularly use in the lab, contact our [VP External](#) with your proposal.

This month, EMGSS, GAPTS, and GAP are proud to present the first virtual seminar of the academic year: Using Inducible Pluripotent Stem Cells as Cellular Models in Research, presented by Kayla Bourque.

Progress in the field of inducible pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) has expanded what we can model in vitro, ranging from complex neurological disorders to cardiomyopathies. However, you may wonder how easy it is to integrate iPSCs into our daily routine. This talk will discuss considerations for how to culture and differentiate iPSCs and will address some common challenges associated with keeping these cells in culture.

EXMD Buddy Program

Stressed out about committee meetings? Looking for the best study spots on campus? No matter your worry, your EXMD buddy is here to support you! The EXMD Buddy Program pairs you with an EXMD student already in the program who can offer you personal insight and advice on academics, grad life, and living in Montreal. For more information, contact emgss.pgss@mail.mcgill.ca.

French Language

If you're looking to learn or improve your French, Montreal is the place to be. Many residents are bilingual and are willing to help you practice! Many organizations also offer courses or opportunities to practice your French.

PGSS courses: <https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en/courses-offered>

McGill courses: <https://www.mcgill.ca/learnfrench/>

YMCA courses: <https://www.ymcanguages.com/en/YM-CA-Language-School/Adult-Courses/French>

If you're looking to practice conversational French in a casual setting, you can join a [French language group/language-exchange group](#).

Les Amis de BAnQ (Bibliothèque de Archives nationales du Québec) offers a free French conversation workshop [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

McGill's Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) website provides an extensive overview of funding opportunities for masters and doctoral students, as well as postdoctoral fellows. For both Canadian and international students, you'll find eligibility details for various funding programs, travel awards, and tips on applying here:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/funding/opportunities>

More information on McGill student aid may be found here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/studentaid/scholarships-aid/graduate>

Housing

Montreal is home to a collection of distinct and vibrant neighborhoods. From the bustling streets of Mile End and the Plateau to the sophisticated feel of Westmount, there is surely a neighborhood that you will come to love. McGill Student Housing offers a comprehensive guide to on-campus graduate accommodations, as well as off-campus options: <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/housing/residence-options/downtown-graduate>

There are several Facebook groups that offer affordable housing options from other students and young professionals looking to sublet or transfer their lease. Searching “McGill Housing” in Facebook will bring up several housing-related groups that you can join. Craigslist and Kijiji are also great resources for finding an apartment.

Tip July 1 of every year traditionally marks Quebec’s Moving Day, the day where many leases begin their year-long contract. This is not a legal requirement, but it does mean that you will be able to find many apartments with leases starting July 1. In the Milton-Parc neighborhood (colloquially known among students as the McGill Ghetto), many landlords have apartments available starting May 1. Start apartment-hunting about a month in advance of these dates to get a sense of what’s available to you!

Transportation

Montreal’s public transportation system (Société de transport de Montreal) provides an extensive bus and metro system that covers much of the downtown area and beyond. Students can take advantage of the Student OPUS card which offers a reduced fare. The cost of the card is \$15. Cards issued between Aug 1 2020 and Dec 31 2020 expire Oct 31 2021, after which you will need to obtain a new card. There are 3 ways to obtain your card:

1. Order online from Minerva: Log into Minerva > Select “Student Menu” > Select “Order your reduced-fare OPUS card”. For more details, please visit <https://www.mcgill.ca/student-records/personal-information/opus>

2. Order by mail: Complete and send the reduced-fare student OPUS card application form along with an original passport photo, a photocopy of a valid government-issued ID, and a bank transfer or personal cheque/money order/bank draft. For more details, please visit http://www.stm.info/en/info/fares/opus-cards-and-other-fare-media/opus-reduced-fare-students#id_deuxieme

3. Visit the STM photo studio located at 1755 Berri Street. The STM now requires you to schedule an appointment before ordering your card at the photo studio. For more details, please visit http://www.stm.info/en/info/fares/opus-cards-and-other-fare-media/opus-reduced-fare-students#id_quatrieme

Be sure to follow all health and safety guidelines when taking public transit.

Home Away from Home

Welcome to Montreal, and congratulations on your admission to McGill! Starting graduate studies overseas is no small feat, so here are some resources to get you started.

For a broad overview of services that McGill provides for its international students, please visit <https://www.mcgill.ca/internationalstudents/>.

Finances & Funding

Need help paying tuition fees? You may be eligible for a differential fee waiver:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/funding/international/dfw>

Read more on eligibility details [here](#).

McGill's Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) website outlines funding information specifically for international students:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/funding/international>

Legal Documents

Immigration Documents: <https://www.mcgill.ca/internationalstudents/immigration-documents>

Work and Permits: <https://www.mcgill.ca/internationalstudents/work>

Compulsory International Health Insurance (Blue Cross): <https://www.mcgill.ca/internationalstudents/health>

Building Community

Making new connections can be a daunting exercise, but we've got your back.

Pair up with a current McGill student to help you get your bearings around Montreal and on campus: <https://www.mcgill.ca/internationalstudents/once-here/buddy>

Find common ground with other students at one of McGill's many student clubs: <https://ssmu.ca/clubs/religion-culture-clubs/>

PGSS Health & Dental Insurance Plan

PGSS provides its graduate students with an extended health and dental insurance plan that is administered by StudentCare. Studentcare offers health and dental insurance at two levels: Enhanced Care and Basic Care. All students who are eligible for automatic coverage are automatically covered by the Enhanced Health and Dental Plan but may switch to the Basic Plan or opt out completely. **The deadline for making changes is September 29, 2020.**

Change of coverage and opt-out period: **Aug 23 – Sep 29, 2020**
 Coverage period: **Sep 1, 2020 – Aug 21, 2021**

Check whether you're automatically covered by the Enhanced plan:

Graduate Students (full-time, additional seasons, non-thesis extension, masters, doctorate)

- Registered by Sep 22 AND
- Paying tuition fees at Canadian or Quebec rates

Post-doctoral fellows (including international)

- Registered by Sep 22, 2020

International Students

- Health insurance is covered by the International Student Services Blue Cross Plan, not by PGSS StudentCare Health Plan
- Automatically covered by the PGSS StudentCare Dental Plan

Canadian vs. International Coverage:

	Canadian Students	International Students
Core Health Coverage	Provincial Medicare	International Student Services Blue Cross Plan (provided by McGill)
Supplementary Health Coverage	PGSS Health Plan (Enhanced or Basic)	PGSS Health Plan (provided by McGill)
Supplementary Dental Coverage	PGSS Dental Plan (Enhanced or Basic)	PGSS Dental Plan (Enhanced or Basic)

How much does the Health and Dental Plan cost?

Enhanced	Health	\$375
	Dental	\$200
Basic	Health	\$325
	Dental	\$150

For detailed information on eligibility and coverage, please visit <https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en/health-and-dental-plan> and <https://studentcare.ca/pgss>.



Health, Wellness, Equity & Diversity

Prioritizing your physical and mental health is crucial to performing well in your studies and research. Never hesitate to reach out to ask for support. If you are in immediate crisis, call 911.

A comprehensive database of resources and services available can be found here:

<https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en/health-and-wellness-committee>

<https://emgss.org/health-wellness>

Mental health resources & support services:

Keep.meSAFE (immediate mental health support): Download “MySSP” from the app store on your mobile device, then follow the instructions

Graduate Peer Support Initiative: <https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en/graduate-peer-support-initiative>

Health resources:

McGill Student Wellness Hub: <https://www.mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>

Off-campus care (clinics, community centres, sexual assault resources, disordered eating resources, & more): <https://www.mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/access-care/campus-care>

Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD): <https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>

Gendered and Sexual Violence Resources:

Information on support and reporting resources: <https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en/gendered-and-sexual-violence-resources>

Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students’ Society: <http://www.sacomss.org/wp/>

Office for Sexual Violence, Response, and Education: <https://www.mcgill.ca/osvrse/>

Anti-racism resources:

A comprehensive list of **on- and off-campus organizations, background readings, fundraisers,** and **mental health resources** related to anti-racism can be found here: <https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en/anti-racism-resources>