

Welcome Booklet for Thesis Students

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Dear new Concordians and Master's (thesis) or PhD student in the CSSE department:

Welcome and congratulations on embarking this new exciting journey as a graduate thesis student! We have put together this booklet to answer what we believe are most frequently asked questions by new students.

Academic questions

1. Is there a typical timeline of events for graduate thesis students?

- (a) Master's thesis students are required to do 4 courses (plus any qualifying courses that are stipulated in their admission letter). Typically, students finish these 4 courses in the first 2 terms, and simultaneously start working on their research with their supervisor. Once the coursework is finished, students will work on their Master's thesis research, which culminates in a written thesis and an oral defense. The average time to completion is a little over 2 years, but some students finish earlier and others take more time. Be aware that FRS funding for Master's students is only for 2 years.*
- (b) PhD students are expected to do 3 courses, usually completed within the first two terms. At the same time, students start working on their research with their supervisor(s), and prepare for their comprehensive exam. The remaining steps are thesis proposal, doctoral seminar, and finally the thesis defense. The average time to completion is between 3 and 4 years. Be aware that FRS funding for PhD students is only for 3 years.*

2. How do I enrol in courses?

All thesis based students have a registration hold on their account. Students must discuss their choice of courses with their thesis supervisor(s), then email Samantha Singh with a cc to their supervisor(s). Samantha will then register the student. The department reserves a certain number of seats for thesis based students, however, the earlier you register, the more certain you are of being able to register in the courses you want.

3. By what date can I drop a course without penalty?

Here is the information about what the academic deadlines are:

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/registration/advising/dne-disc.html>

And the link to this year's academic dates:

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/registration/term-dates-deadlines.html>

4. Who can I go to for advice on courses, registration, blocks on my account etc.?

Talk to your supervisor for advice on what courses to take, or anything else.

Samantha Singh is the Graduate Program Coordinator for thesis-based students and will be able to help you with questions regarding registration, scheduling, graduation, fees etc.

5. What is Moodle and how can I access it?

Moodle is an educational platform where teachers put materials for the class, such as the course outline, slides for each week, grades, projects and files.

Moodle is accessible at www.moodle.concordia.ca

If you are a student registered in a course, you will automatically be given access to the moodle site for the course.

If you are the TA for a course, the instructor should add you as a teaching assistant to the moodle site for the course. Feel free to contact the instructor if this does not happen.

6. How can I find the Student Hub and what can I do in it?

The Student Hub has information for students, such as important dates, your courses, Services & Resources, useful resources and news. Visit:

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/graduate.html>

7. What is the graduation process?

When a student is close to completing all of their program requirements, they can log into their Student Centre and apply for graduation. The student will be prompted to pay a fee and then you should be able to see a star on your account to show you are a potential graduate.

See: <https://www.concordia.ca/sgs/thesis-office/masters-thesis-route.html>

and <https://www.concordia.ca/sgs/thesis-office/doctoral-thesis-route.html>

Technical Questions

8. Do I have a Concordia email address? How many email accounts do I have?

The following link refers you to the information regarding Concordia emails. You can find the instructions for creating your Concordia email.

<https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/faculty-staff-email.html#:~:text=The%20standard%20email%20address%20format,.lastname%40concordia.ca>

The ENCS email address is specific to Gina Cody school students and staff and is required to access some systems and apps under the control of the Gina Cody school. This ENCS email is also used for some specific messages for the students of this department.

<https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/encs-user-account.html>

9. How can I get a Concordia student ID card?

You must visit the Birks Centre (LB-185), take a photo and you will receive your card instantly.

You will be charged a \$12.70 fee directly to your student account. For more information visit: <https://www.concordia.ca/card/student-id.html>

10. What is an ENCS user account and how do I open it?

You can check the following link:

<https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/encs-user-account.html>

11. Do I get a premium Zoom account?

You can find the related information at the following link:

<https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/videoconferencing.html>

12. What should I do if I lose our internet connection in the ER Building?

ITS technical help is available in ER 1001. You should also report it to help@concordia.ca.

Working/TAing

13. Can I work during my studies?

Yes, but before undertaking any work, you must inform and discuss with your thesis supervisor.

For international students, it is advisable to consult [ISO](#) to ensure that your work is permissible and does not impact any later immigration complications. Generally speaking, students are permitted to work 20 hours a week in Fall and Winter. During the Summer, students are permitted to work 40 hours. Please always confirm with ISO for your specific situation.

14. What type of jobs can I do?

Typical jobs done by students include TAships (tutorials, lab instructors, markers, programmers on duty), exam invigilation, library, etc.

Exam invigilation: see:

<https://www.concordia.ca/hr/jobs/openings/exam-invigilation.html>

15. How can I be a TA?

*You can apply online: see: <https://www.concordia.ca/ginacody/about/jobs.html#ta>
In the CSSE dept, the TA coordinator is Colin Wyke colin.wyke@concordia.ca (who replaces Nimalan while he is away).*

16. How can I open an employee account?

You can find all the necessary information for managing your Netname account in this webpage: <https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/netname-account-management.html>

17. How can I obtain a SIN number?

All employees in Canada must have a Social Insurance Number(SIN).

The procedure to get one is simple: you can apply online, by mail or in person. The last option is fast and easy. For more information visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin.html>

18. What is TRAC?

TRAC is the Teaching and Research Assistants at Concordia Union. This union protects the employee rights of the teaching and research assistants All TAs are automatically part of TRAC. For more information visit: <https://www.trac-union.ca/>

Financial Questions

19. When are the Tuition payment deadlines?

- *Fall - September 30*
- *Winter - January 31*
- *Summer - May 31*

20. Are there any bursaries/scholarships that I can apply for?

Yes. These are the major bursaries/scholarships:

- *[NSERC Master's and Doctoral](#) (for Canadians and PR)*
- *[FRONT Master's and Doctoral](#)*
- *[FRONT Merit Scholarship Program for Foreign Students \(PBEEE\)](#)*
- *Also see: <https://www.concordia.ca/sgs/awards-funding/provincial-federal.html>*

For a more complete list, see: <https://www.concordia.ca/sgs/awards-funding.html>

21. Is there any specific funding or financial help to buy computers, or electronic devices, or do online courses coursera etc. for thesis-based Concordians?

No. All such help, if any, comes from the thesis supervisor, and can vary based on the research funding available to the supervisor.

22. Where do I send the void cheque to get payments?

You can send a void cheque to payroll@concordia.ca along with your details such as student ID, employee ID. This can also be attached to the first bursary that you are paid.

23. Do I have to declare taxes?

Yes, please see link below

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/international/living-working/working-in-canada/income-tax-for-international-students.html>

24. How do I check my payments from Concordia?

The UNITY portal provides various services where you can find digital versions of biweekly pay stubs and tax forms. UNITY can be accessed via Carrefour's My CU Account.

25. Are there any sources of funding for travel to conferences, from the university?

There are two awards for participation in conferences:

SGS Conference and Exposition Award

PhD students can apply once per term within the first five years of their program.

Master's students can apply for one award within the first two years of their program.

The award grants maximum 1000\$. For more information consult:

<https://www.concordia.ca/sgs/awards-funding/in-house.html>

<https://www.concordia.ca/ginacody/about/funding-resources/budget-office.html>

Faculty Conference Travel Support

This funding is limited to 2nd or 3rd year FRS eligible PhD students and offers maximum 500\$ per year. For more information please visit:

<https://www.concordia.ca/ginacody/about/funding-resources/budget-office.html>

<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/ginacody/docs/dean/application-for-conference-travel-support.pdf>

ER Building

26. How can I get an Access card?

Your supervisor should send a message to Ms. Massy Joulani, Department Administrator, with your name and student ID. If you are registered in a course or have a CIP (Continuing-in-Program) status, you are able to get an access card. Once you receive confirmation from Massy that you are entered in the database, you can pick up your access card from Security in the Hall Building.

Please note that students in the Gina Cody School do not need to fill out a form, or to pay to get the access card. Please politely insist with Security that you were told you can get the access card.

27. Is the ER building accessible 24/7?

Yes. After 9 pm, the main doors of the ER building are locked. However, you can ring a bell near the entrance, and the security guard will open it for you. It may take 10-15 minutes if the guard is doing the rounds on another floor.

The main doors on the 9th to 12th floors are programmed to be open between 9 and 5 pm on weekdays, but can be opened with a valid access card outside these hours.

28. How do I connect to the wifi in the ER building?

You can connect to the Concordia University wifi using your netname credentials. For more information visit:

<https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/concordia-wireless-network.html>

29. Where can I have zoom or in-person meetings?

There are breakout rooms for discussion with other students on floors 9, 11, and 12. Please note that these are not to be used as your personal office or for lunch.

There are also areas by the windows on floors 9 and 12 with desks, chairs, and screens provided by the department. Bring your laptop and a cable if you want to connect to a screen, and you can work in these areas.

30. Is there a place for graduate students to meet?

There is a large lounge on the 11th floor available to graduate students. It has a pingpong table, sofas etc.

Floors 9, 11, and 12 also have a small kitchenette near the central hallway.

31. Where can I print/photocopy?

Printing services in Concordia are provided by Dprint. There is a printer available on the 11th floor. You have to swipe your Concordia ID card, sign into your profile on the machine, add funds to your account (the service is paid but affordable compared to off-campus locations) and complete the print/scan job. For more information visit:

<https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/web-print.html>

Some research labs have their own printers as well.

If you need to print a poster, this can be useful:

<https://www.concordia.ca/it/services/plotting-encs.html>

COVID-related questions

32. Where can I get vaccinated?

Please consult this webpage:

<https://www.concordia.ca/health/medical/clinic/vaccination.html>

33. What are the current regulations regarding COVID-19?

The COVID-19 regulations change from time to time so for the most up-to-date information visit: <https://www.concordia.ca/coronavirus.html>

Miscellaneous

34. How can I join the Concordia gym?

Le Gym is located in the EV building. For more info visit:

https://www.concordia.ca/campus-life/recreation/facilities/le-gym.html?utm_source=vanity&utm_campaign=legym

35. What are the resources Concordia Library provides?

Concordia's Webster library has a large collection of books, electronic resources and so much more. You can find different types of study spaces and reading rooms: For more information visit: <https://library.concordia.ca/>

36. What are the health services provided by concordia? (Mental and physical healthcare)

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/international/health-insurance.html>

37. Do Concordia students have any specific community (online or in person)?

Concordia uses Social Media such as Instagram which students can use to get information. Also, in-person orientation sessions are available for new students, so they can become familiar with Concordia.

For thesis-based students, CSE GRAC is the Computer Science & Software Engineering Graduate Researchers Activities Committee which organises multiple events and gatherings.

38. What are the useful workshops that I can join to enhance our abilities in different skills from writing a thesis or a resume?

GradProskills is a great resource. See:

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/gradproskills.html>

39. What to do in Montreal in September?

There are many things you can do in Montreal. This website is a great guide to things to do in Montreal: <https://www.mtlblog.com/>

40. Any cafe recommendations where can I do work/study?

There are some cafes that you can join to study/work. You can find some of them in the following links:

<https://www.mtlblog.com/10-montreal-cafes-without-tons-of-students-so-you-can-actually-get-work-done>

<https://www.mtlblog.com/montreal/7-montreal-cafs-where-you-can-actually-get-some-work-done>

<https://www.mtlblog.com/montreal/10-cozy-montreal-cafes-for-studying-and-actually-getting-work-done>

41. How do I obtain an OPUS card?

You can check the opus card section in the following link:

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/birks/assistance-requests.html>

OPUS card

- The *Société de transport de Montréal* (STM) uses your student ID card photo to create your transit pass, the OPUS card.
- You may submit an OPUS card request 24 hours after the university issues your student ID.
- To qualify for an OPUS card, you must have a home address in Quebec saved in your Student Centre and you must be enrolled in full-time studies (at least 12 credits). Note that wait-listed courses do not count towards enrolment.
- The STM will mail your OPUS card to your home address.
- **Request a student OPUS card.** You can also request a student OPUS card by logging in to the Student Hub and going to **My CU Account**.
 - Follow the instructions and make a payment of \$15 to the STM via the OPUS platform.
- Another option: print an OPUS attestation letter (per the attestation letter instructions, specifying OPUS letter) and then take it to the **STM photo studio** at Berri-UQAM metro station. Note that you may need an appointment.
- If you run into any problems, feel free to contact Birks staff. Reach us at 514-848-2424, ext. 2668, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or, email us at students@concordia.ca.

42. Does Concordia offer accommodations?

Students have options to rent rooms or accommodations from individuals or rental companies.

Concordia does provide accommodations as well. You can check the following link:

<https://www.concordia.ca/students/housing.html>

43. What are the rental ranges for different areas?

You can find information about renting in Montreal here:

<https://www.concordia.ca/campus-life/life-in-montreal/renting-in-montreal.html>

Questions for International Students

44. What are the steps to extend the immigration documents?

The best resource for all questions regarding international students is ISO: <https://www.concordia.ca/students/international.html>