

Concordia Graduate Research Activities Committee

Welcome Booklet for Thesis Students

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Introduction

Dear incoming Master's (thesis) and PhD students in the CSSE department at Concordia.

Welcome to the heart of graduate student life – the Graduate Research Activities Committee! Our mission is to create a vibrant and supportive space for graduate students, both master's and Ph.D. candidates, to come together, connect, and thrive throughout their academic journey.

We believe that academic success goes hand in hand with personal growth and well-being. That's why we're committed to organizing diverse activities that strike the perfect balance between education and recreation. Whether you're passionate about your research or simply looking to unwind, we've got something for you.

We've designed our calendar to cater to your needs, from stimulating workshops and seminars that enhance your academic skills to exciting recreational outings and social events. It's not just about books and research here; it's about forging lasting friendships, gaining new experiences, and creating unforgettable memories.

Join us in celebrating the graduate student experience. Discover the perfect blend of intellectual stimulation and fun, all within the welcoming embrace of the Graduate Research Activities Community. Your academic journey is important, and so is your overall well-being. Let's make your time in graduate school memorable and meaningful together!

Below are some common questions and answers that you may have regarding your program. We hope they will be useful to you.

1 Academic Questions

1. Is there a typical timeline of events for graduate thesis students?
 - Master's thesis students must do 4 courses (plus any qualifying courses 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, culminating in a written thesis and an oral defence.
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.
 - Ph.D. 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 the thesis proposal, doctoral seminar, and thesis defense. The average time to completion is a little over 4 years. Be aware that FRS funding for PhD students is only for 3 years.
2. How do I enroll 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 the Graduate Program Advisor (GPA) with a cc to their supervisor(s). the GPA 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 for 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>
 - 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.
 - The Graduate Program Advisor 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 instructors post 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.
 - For details, <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>

2 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.
For details, visit: Email - Faculty & Staff
 - 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 to send specific messages to the students of the 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 fee (about 15\$) 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?
 - AITS technical help is available in ER 1001. You should also report it to help@concordia.ca.

3 Working/TAing

13. Can I work during my studies?
 - Yes, but before undertaking any work, you must inform and discuss it 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 can 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 students do include TAs (tutorials, lab instructors, markers, programmers on duty), exam invigilation, library, etc.
 - For exam invigilation, see: <https://www.concordia.ca/hr/jobs/openings/exam-invigilation.html>
15. How can I be a TA?
 - You can apply online here: <https://www.concordia.ca/ginacody/about/jobs.html#ta>
 - In the CS&SE dept., you can contact ta@encs.concordia.ca.
16. How can I open an employee account?
 - You can find all the necessary information for managing your Netname account on 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 Assistant 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/>

4 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:
 - (a) NSERC Master's and Doctoral (for Canadians and PR)
 - (b) FRQNT Master's and Doctoral
 - (c) FRQNT Merit Scholarship Program for Foreign Students (PBEEE)
- Also visit: <https://www.concordia.ca/sgs/awards-funding/provincial-federal.html>
- For a more complete list, visit: <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 like 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 and 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 the 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 funding sources for travel to conferences from the university?

- There are two awards for participation in conferences:
 - (a) 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. For more information, consult: <https://www.concordia.ca/sgs/awards-funding/in-house.html> and <https://www.concordia.ca/ginacody/about/funding-resources/budget-office.html>
 - (b) Faculty Conference Travel Support
This funding is limited to 2nd or 3rd-year FRS-eligible PhD students. For more information, please visit: <https://www.concordia.ca/ginacody/about/funding-resources/budget-office.html> and <https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/ginacody/docs/dean/application-for-conference-travel-support.pdf>

5 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. You can get an access card if you are registered in a course or have a CIP (Continuing-in-Program) status. Once you receive confirmation from Massy that you have been entered into 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 pay to get the access card. Please politely insist with Security that you were told you could 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 their rounds on another floor.
- The main doors on the 9th to 12th floors are programmed to be open between 9 and 5 p.m. on weekdays but can be opened with a valid access card outside these hours.

28. How do I connect to the Wi-Fi in the ER building?

- You can connect to the Concordia University Wi-Fi 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 Ping-Pong 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 in to 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>

6 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>

7 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 does provide?

- Concordia's Webster library has many 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 organizes multiple events and gatherings.
38. What useful workshops can I 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> and <https://www.mtlblog.com/montreal/7-montreal-cafs-where-you-can-actually-get-some-work-done> and <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>
42. Does Concordia offer accommodations?
- Students can 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>

8 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>

9 Some Useful Links

Access Centre for Students with Disabilities
Student Success Centre
Counselling and Psychological Services
Concordia Library Citation and Style Guides
Health Services
Financial Aid and Awards
Academic Integrity
Dean of Students Office
International Students Office
Student Hub
Sexual Assault Resource Centre
HOJO (Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank)
CSU Advocacy Centre
Aboriginal Student Resource Centre