



Making Ends Meet
A Guide to Graduate Funding at McGill

2003-2004

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Making Ends Meet
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1.0 One of the most important things affecting your experience as a graduate student is how and to what extent you are funded. This is something that varies considerably at McGill, both from department to department and even among students in the same department. Some students will be admitted with “full funding” for a specified period of time, meaning that they have been guaranteed a minimum level of funding starting at, for example, \$18,000 per year for doctoral students in the Natural and Health Sciences and, for example, \$15,000 per year for doctoral students in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Many students are offered only a portion of this amount upon admission, while others receive no funding at all. But even if you are fortunate enough to be one of the people receiving “full funding,” questions about money never disappear entirely, as you begin to consider new sources of support either to increase your overall level of funding or to change your mix of funding sources so as to free up more time for what really counts: your studies and research.

Making Ends Meet: A Guide to Graduate Funding at McGill is intended to help you maximize your funding while at McGill so that you can devote yourself more fully to what is, in the long run at least, most important: successfully completing your degree. To do so, it is important that you understand the basic sources of funding, what they are, how you can apply for them and some of the implications of different forms of funding. There are a number of different sources of information regarding funding, and *Making Ends Meet* will help clarify many of the basics involved in funding your graduate studies at McGill, as well as point you in the right direction for delving deeper into the intricacies

of graduate student funding. There is also a separate section addressing the special funding needs of international students at McGill.

And remember: your department (or prospective department) is often the most important source of information and guidance for funding. Many important steps in the funding process are at the departmental level, and funding is often tied to specific areas of research interest or disciplines. So consult your department's web page and read your GradProg listserv announcements regularly. And don't forget to discuss funding issues with your department's Graduate Program Director or Graduate Program Coordinator. A small investment of your time can have big payoffs—literally!

2.0

The Types of Funding Available to McGill Graduate Students

There are 4 basic ways to finance your graduate studies at McGill: 1) competitive fellowships and awards; 2) stipends; 3) research and teaching assistantships; and 4) federal or provincial government loans and bursaries. Each type of support has important implications for your studies, both because different levels of funding may be involved and because the responsibilities or conditions attached to any particular award can vary substantially. Graduate students frequently have multiple sources of funding, and it is not unusual for departmental funding offers to include a combination of several different forms of support. So it is important to understand the implications of any particular form of financial support or combination of them.

It is also important to remember that one condition that is often attached to competitive awards is that you cannot accept another award, receive more than a certain maximum level of support from other sources and/or work for more than a fixed number

of hours to remain eligible for the award. Some awards may also be more prestigious, even if they involve lesser amounts of money. The most important thing is to be aware of all of your options and try to find a mix that maximizes your total level of funding and flexibility. And, believe it or not, people often have to turn down awards. If you find yourself in this enviable position, you should still list the award on your *curriculum vitae* (CV), but indicate that you declined to accept it.

2.1. Merit-Based Funding: Fellowship, Stipend or Assistantship?

Of the four ways to finance your graduate studies at McGill, three are based on merit rather than financial need. These are fellowships, stipends and research or teaching assistantships. How they are awarded, the conditions attached to the award and their levels of funding vary considerably, so it is important that you understand the general implications of having one type of award or another.

Particularly for stipends and research assistantships, which are generally at the discretion of individual professors, it is important to have any promises of funding in writing. If such promises are not in writing and they fall through for any reason, you will have no recourse if the funding does not materialize and you will have to make ends meet through your own resources. This does not mean that such promises of assistance cannot be conditional, only that the conditions need to be clearly spelled out at the beginning (for example, that the promised stipend or research assistantship is conditional on the professor's research proposal being funded).

2.1.1. Fellowships:

These are scholarships awarded to students through national and university level competitions. Fellowships are the most prestigious awards because of the high level of

competition. In general, they range from a minimum of \$5,000 per year to as high as \$35,000 or more per year. Fellowships are also exempt from provincial income taxes in Quebec and there is a partial reduction from applicable federal income taxes.

Fellowships are awarded by a variety of organizations and there are a number of internal McGill fellowships, all of which will be discussed in greater detail below. Depending on the type of fellowship you win, you may be expected to do research in an area covered by a grant awarded to your supervisor, or you may be allowed to carry out research that is not directly associated with your supervisor's ongoing research. Either way, it is important that you discuss your funding with your actual or prospective supervisors.

Fellowships from Canada's three research councils and the Quebec provincial government equivalent (see below) are restricted to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. For Quebec provincial awards, the applicant must also be considered a legal resident of the province. Other granting agencies and McGill internal fellowships are available for international students.

2.1.2. Stipends:

These are scholarships paid to graduate students from a professor's grant. Because they are paid from a professor's grant, it is up to him or her to decide who to award it to. Because they are considered scholarships, however, the student who receives a stipend is not actually working for the professor, although the student's thesis research must form a part of the research program that is being funded by the grant. Professors also have to request stipend money in their grant proposals, so you might want to remind your own supervisor!

The value of individual stipends is determined by the professor, although some research councils (see Table 1) set minimum levels. Because stipends are considered scholarships, they are also exempt from Quebec provincial income taxes and enjoy a partial exemption from federal income taxes as well. To enjoy these tax benefits, you and the sponsoring professor (usually your supervisor) must fill out an *Award Certification Form*, as well as an academic appointment form. The Award Certification Form is available at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/fellowships/postaward/>.

Table 1. Stipends paid from grants (support to do own research)

Granting Agency	Type of stipend	Minimum Amount	Maximum Amount	Additional Requirement
CIHR*	Doctoral	\$17 000	n/a	
	Masters	\$17 000	n/a	
	Health Professionals in Masters or Doctoral	\$35 000	n/a	Licenced in Canada; 0-2 yrs. postgrad. acad. experience
		\$45 000	n/a	Licenced in Canada; >2 yrs. postgrad. acad. experience
	\$17 000	\$35 000	Not licenced to practise in Canada	
NSERC*	Doctoral	n/a	\$19 000	
	Masters	n/a	\$16 500	
SSHRC*	Doctoral	n/a	\$15 000	
	Masters	n/a	\$12 000	
FQRNT FQRSC FRSQ Other agencies which do not stipulate stipend rates	No minimum or maximum determined by Quebec agencies, and some other external agencies. McGill Guidelines: Grant applications should budget for at least the maximum allowable by the corresponding federal granting agency in the field of research. Where o			

* source: Tricouncil document entitled "Use of Grant Funds":
at time of publication (2003-08-01 update)

http://www.nserc.ca/professors_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=f3

2.1.3. Assistantships:

Graduate students can be offered 2 types of assistantships: teaching assistantships and research assistantships. Both are open to all graduate students, regardless of nationality. Unlike fellowships and stipends, however, they are considered paid employment and are not exempt from provincial or federal income tax.

2.1.3.1. *Teaching Assistants*

Teaching Assistants (TAs) undertake course-related work under the supervision of a university professor or course lecturer. These responsibilities often include leading small group discussions or directing lab work, as well as the grading of course assignments. At the instructor's discretion, TAs may be given the opportunity to give course lectures. TAs and their supervising instructors are expected to agree, in writing, on the workload distribution at the beginning of the term.

All TAs at McGill are required to join a union, the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill (AGSEM). A collective agreement signed by AGSEM and the University governs the conditions and terms of employment for all TAs. Currently, TA hourly wages vary from department to department and faculty to faculty. As a result of the most recent collective agreement, however, salaries will be gradually increased in each through January 2007 and TAs in all departments will receive the same wage by January 2006.

TA positions must be posted by each department and interested graduate students may apply for them. The collective agreement establishes the dates for postings and the criteria to be used in assigning specific positions, including the establishment of a priority pool. To be considered for a TAship, *you must apply by the designated deadlines*. If you do not, you risk not getting a TAship for that semester.

For more information on the collective agreement, including posting dates for TA appointments and hourly wages in your department, you can consult the Department of Human Resources at <http://www.mcgill.ca/hr/policies/tas/> and the full text of the collective agreement at <https://upload.mcgill.ca/hr/agsemeng.pdf>. The AGSEM website,

<http://www.web.net/~agsem/>, also has valuable information regarding the collective agreement, as well as on your rights, responsibilities and other issues related to being a teaching assistant at McGill. As a TA, the AGSEM is your official representative, so if you have any questions about being a TA or are experiencing problems in your TA position, do not hesitate to contact them at agsem@web.net or 398-2582.

2.1.3.2. Graduate Student Research Assistants (RAs)

Research Assistants are hired to carry out research for individual professors to help further the professor's program of research. Typically, professors budget for RAs to perform specific tasks in their grant proposals. The work may or may not relate to your own area of research, and in many departments professors hire students as RAs even though they are not supervising their research. Graduate student RA's are contracted on an hourly basis and should not work more than 10 hours/week if they are enrolled in full-time studies. The minimum RA wage for Masters students is \$14/hour and for PhD students it is \$18/hour. There is no maximum rate.

Because professors often are looking for people with particular skills or backgrounds to hire as RAs, it may be in your interest to contact particular professors who you know may be looking for RAs or to let your departmental Graduate Program Director and Graduate Program Secretary know you are ready and willing to work. This is especially a good idea if you have particular skills that might be in high demand (e.g., special computer or lab skills, a strong background in statistical analysis, language abilities, etc.). Graduate student finances and professors' research are serious matters, so don't be shy!

The actual responsibilities of RAs are determined by the supervising professor and will vary considerably. Your work as an RA is supposed to be directly related to the professor's own research, but as your employer, professors have considerable leeway in defining the specific tasks they want you to do. Occasionally, you may question whether or not those tasks are appropriate. For example, picking up your professor's dry cleaning or babysitting his kids are *not* appropriate responsibilities for RAs—even if they “free up your professor's time” for more important things. Sometimes you may be asked to do jobs that you feel are not an appropriate use of your time (e.g., filing papers, rearranging book shelves, etc.). This may be true, but if this is what the professor feels he or she needs, they do have the option (within limits) of “under-employing” you if that is what they want to do—and they do not abuse their authority in the process. If you feel strongly that what you are being asked to do is inappropriate, first talk to the professor. If you can't reach a consensus, either resign your RAship or discuss the matter with your Graduate Program Director.

2.2. Loans and Bursaries: When the Numbers Just Don't Add Up

Despite all of your best efforts, your funding package may simply not be enough to allow you to support yourself while studying full-time. If you find yourself in that situation, you may be eligible for a loan or bursary. Unlike the other sources of funding, loans and bursaries are based on financial need, not merit. Except for the Work/Study program, you are not required to work in exchange for the support and your principal obligation is to repay loan money after graduation. Several provinces also have loan forgiveness programs to help students reduce their debt loads.

The McGill Student Aid Office is responsible for administering all needs-based financial aid. It is located in the Brown Student Services Building, 3600 McTavish Street, Suit 3200, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2. You can reach them at (514) 398-6013 and student.aid@mcgill.ca for information. A lot of very useful information relating to student finances can also be found on the Student Aid Office website, <http://www.mcgill.ca/stuserv/aid/aid.htm>.

There are two types of need-based financial aid. Government Loans and Bursaries are administered by the province in which the student is deemed to be a resident. Even though you are studying in Quebec, you may legally be considered to be a resident of another province and will have to apply for assistance there. The McGill Student Aid Office provides information regarding application procedures for these government loan programs. It will also be able to help you determine your provincial residency status, if there is any doubt.

If you are a U.S. citizen, you do not lose your eligibility for Stafford Loans, both subsidized and unsubsidized, and parental loans (PLUS) while studying at McGill. Alternative loan programs are also available. You can contact the Student Aid Office for further information.

The Student Aid Office also administers McGill Student Aid. This includes short term loans to cover emergency situations and a Work/Study program. There are also a limited number of small bursaries that are awarded on the basis of both financial need and academic standing. Funding for these bursaries comes from several different sources at McGill, including an annual transfer of funds to the Student Aid Office from the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office. To be able to apply for any of these programs,

you must have already started your studies at McGill. So once you are at McGill, if you find yourself in a difficult financial situation, do not hesitate to contact the Student Aid Office. If you are an international student and find yourself in a difficult financial situation, contact the International Student Services Office (see below), which also administers some forms of short-need needs-based assistance.

3.0 *Types of Graduate Fellowships: Getting the “Big Bucks”*

It should be clear that fellowships are the ideal way to fund your graduate studies at McGill. They offer the most prestige, the highest level of funding and are generally the most flexible. For these same reasons, they are also the hardest to get. No matter how strong you feel your academic record may be, successful applications require a good deal of work and preparation. You need to find out what the different awards are and the specific requirements for each. And do not wait to the last moment; deadlines are firm and rushed or incomplete applications are quickly eliminated from consideration by adjudicating committees overwhelmed with hundreds (if not thousands) of applications from better prepared applicants.

It is also important to remember that you often do not have to already be in a graduate program to apply for a fellowship. Many fellowships are open to applicants who plan to start their graduate studies during the following academic year, even if they have not been formally accepted into a graduate program or even decided where they would like to study. Of course, the actual disbursement of any award is conditional upon starting graduate studies the following year, although sometimes awards may be deferred for a limited period of time. So plan ahead! You should contact the specific funding agency

directly, as well as the McGill department where you would like to undertake your graduate study and/or the Fellowships and Awards Section of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office (more on this below) in order to ascertain your eligibility and specific program application or nomination procedures.

There are 3 basic types of fellowships available to graduate students at McGill: Canadian Research Council Fellowships, other External Fellowships and Internal McGill Fellowships. Quebec residents also can apply to one of three provincial research funding agencies. Together, Councils and other external fellowships provided McGill graduate students with approximately \$16 million in funding during 2002-2003, so they are a major component of graduate student funding. As a result of new funding initiatives by the Federal Government, we anticipate that it will grow substantially in the next few years, benefiting a large number of graduate students at McGill. It is also important to remember that, in order to be eligible for internal McGill fellowships, students are required to apply for external funding as well.

Table 2 summarizes important fellowship information for each of the 3 Canadian research councils and the 3 Québec provincial granting agencies. While you can apply for both a Research Council and Québec fellowship if you are eligible, you *cannot* apply to more than one Research Council or more than one Québec agency in the same competition year. The nature of your research or discipline generally determines which council or agency you should to apply to, in line with its particular funding mandate, although occasionally there are grey areas when it is not clear which council or agency is most appropriate. In addition to their regular competitions, the Research Councils and Québec granting agencies offer specialized competitions and supplements to their basic

awards. If in doubt, check either with the funding body directly or with the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section. And remember: the information provided in Table 1 is what was available at the time this document went to (electronic) press. So it is always a good idea to double-check important information on the agency's webpage.

Table 2. Fellowships (Competitive Awards) from Federal and Quebec Councils

Granting Agency	Award Type	Annual Amount	Research Allowance	Duration	Application Deadline	Application Location
CIHR http://www.cihr.ca	Doctoral Award -Regular	\$20 000	\$500	Max. 3 years	October 15	CIHR
	Doctoral-CGS	\$30 000	\$5 000	Max. 3 years		
	Masters-CGS	\$17 500	n/a	1 year	TBA	TBA
	Health Professionals registering in Masters or Doctoral Program: Apply to "Fellowship" Program (see postdoc section, Table 2)	\$20,000, \$38,000, or \$47,500.	\$3 500	Max. 5 years	October 1 or February 1	CIHR
NSERC http://www.nserc.ca	Doctoral-Regular	\$21 000	n/a	2 years	McGill: Oct 7 Direct: Nov 15	University where registered last 12 months (otherwise direct)
	Doctoral-CGS	\$35 000	n/a	Max. 3 years		
	Masters-Regular	\$17 300	n/a	1 year / 2 years		
	Masters-CGS	\$17 500	n/a	1 year	no deadline	University of tenure
	Industrial - Masters or Doctoral NSERC portion Company portion (minimum)	\$15 000 \$5 500	n/a	2 years		
SSHRC http://www.sshrc.ca	Doctoral-Regular	\$19 000	n/a	Max. 4 years	McGill: Oct 7 Direct: Nov 15	University where registered (otherwise direct)
	Doctoral-CGS	\$35 000	n/a	Max. 3 years		
	Masters-CGS	\$17 500	n/a	1 year	TBA	University where registered last 12 months (otherwise direct)
FQRNT http://www.fqrnt.gouv.qc.ca	Doctoral	\$20 000	n/a	Max. 3 years	October 15	University where registered (otherwise direct)
	Masters	\$15 000	n/a	Max. 2 years		
FQRSC http://www.fqrsc.gouv.qc.ca	Doctoral	\$20 000	n/a	Max. 3 years	October 15	University where registered (otherwise direct)
	Masters	\$15 000	n/a	Max. 2 years		
FRSQ/ http://www.frsq.gouv.qc.ca	Doctoral - Regular	\$20 000	n/a	Max. 3 years	October 15	FRSQ
	Masters - Regular	\$15 000	n/a	Max. 2 years		
	Doctoral - Health Professionals *	\$25,024	n/a	Max. 3 years		
	Masters - Health Professionals *	to \$39,323	n/a	Max. 2 years		
	* licenced to practise in Quebec					

3.1. Canadian Research Council Fellowships.

The most important sources of fellowships for Canadian citizens and permanent residents are the 3 federal research councils: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

(CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). In 2002-2003, the 3 councils together provided over 5800 graduate students with approximately \$125 million in fellowships. The three councils funded close to 400 McGill University students with approximately \$10 million in fellowships.

Starting in 2003-04, a new Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) program will be phased-in over a 4-year period. When fully phased in, the program will provide an additional \$105 million dollars to Canada's three granting councils. This funding will be allocated among the three granting councils in proportion to the distribution of the graduate student community: 60 per cent to SSHRC, 30 per cent to NSERC and 10 per cent to the CIHR. The CGS program will eventually fund an additional 2,000 Masters and 2,000 PhD students nationwide. This will bring the total number of scholarships funded by the federal government to almost 10,000, a 70 percent increase compared to 2002-03.

3.2. Fellowships for Québec Residents.

If you are a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada *and* a resident of Québec as defined by *la Loi et le Règlement sur l'assurance-maladie du Québec*, you may be eligible for graduate funding from the Québec provincial government at both the Masters and doctoral levels. There are 3 funding agencies, depending on your area of research: the *Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Nature et les Technologies* (FQRNT, formerly FCAR) in the areas of Natural Sciences and Engineering, the *Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la culture*, in the Social Sciences and

Humanities, and the *Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec* (FRSQ) in the Medical and Health Sciences.

In addition to the regular fellowship programs, there are also special programs in aerospace studies, natural resources and transport, as well as programs for persons returning to graduate studies after a long interruption, and for health professionals (FRSQ only).

3.3. Other External Fellowships.

There is a vast array of fellowships available to finance graduate studies at McGill. The Graduate & Postdoctoral Office (GPSO) frequently receives announcements of external awards and in turn announces them on the GradProg listserv. A number of these are listed in the External Fellowships chapter of the Fellowships and Awards section of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Calendar, which can be consulted at <http://www.mcgill.ca/courses/#GRAD>. These external awards are entered, along with other, smaller or more specialized external fellowships and awards, into a searchable computer database that students, potential students and faculty members are welcome to consult. Fellowship announcements are also posted on the bulletin board outside the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section, James Administration Building, Room 400. When an external fellowship announcement is received that maybe of particular interest to a specific department or academic unit, the information is forwarded to that unit for posting and/or circulation. McGill University also subscribes to the SPIN database for sources of research funding. The database carries a number of graduate and postdoctoral fellowships, scholarships, awards, prizes and other sources of funding available to graduate students. You can access the SPIN database at

<http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/fellowships/publications/spin/>, where you will also find useful search tips. There is no fee for accessing the database as long as you are connected to the internet through McGill (i.e., through an on-campus computer terminal, through a DAS account, or using VPN with your home high-speed internet connection). Please consult the NCS web site for information on remote access, at <http://www.mcgill.ca/ncs/access/remote/>. Finally, the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section maintains a small collection of reference books on funding for graduate study. These may be consulted at the reception desk.

The sheer abundance of awards necessarily means that you will need to take the initiative in seeking them out. GPSO and your department can provide a lot of leads and advice, but only you can actually apply for them. And only you know your own specific interests and needs. Moreover, there literally are so many awards that no one can keep track of them all and a bit of “detective work” on your part, taking full advantage of the World Wide Web, can sometimes pay off quite nicely. Here is a partial list of some places you might start:

AUCC: <http://www.aucc.ca>
British Council: <http://www.britcoun.org/eis/campus.htm>
Canada Council: <http://www.canadacouncil.ca>
CBIE : <http://www.cbie.ca> and <http://www.destineducation.ca/>
DAAD : <http://www.daad.org>
Franco Canadien : <http://ambafrance-ca.org/HYPERLAB/AIDEMEM/index.html>
Canadian and International Scholarships Program:
<http://www.scholarships-bourses-ca.org/>
IDRC: <http://www.idrc.ca/>
NRC: <http://www.nrc.ca>
Ontario Graduate School: http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/not_secure/OGS.htm
World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/scholarships/home.html>
Social Science Research Council: <http://www.ssrc.org/>

Once you have found possible external funding sources, you should contact the specific funding agency directly. You might also wish to consult the McGill department where you are or plan to do your graduate work, as well as the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section, in order to determine your eligibility and to get advice on application or nomination procedures. Competitions often take place one full year before you would actually receive the award, so definitely plan ahead. In particular, if you are finishing your undergraduate degree and would like to start graduate studies the following year, don't wait until you are actually formally accepted into a program or, even worse, actually start your graduate studies to apply for funding.

3.4. Internal McGill Fellowships.

McGill has a variety of fellowships available to new incoming students and students who have already started their graduate studies at McGill. A complete list is given in the Fellowships and Awards section of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Calendar, which can be consulted at <http://www.mcgill.ca/courses/#GRAD>. Most awards are made either at the departmental level or on the basis of departmental recommendations, so again it is important to discuss issues related to financing your graduate studies directly with your supervisor, Graduate Program Coordinator and/or Graduate Program Director. In the case of fellowships reserved for incoming students, what are generally referred to as "recruitment fellowships," the notice of award should be included in your admissions letter as part of a total funding package.

In terms of levels of funding, the principal sources of internal McGill fellowships are the McGill Major Fellowships and the McGill Graduate Studies Fellowships (MGSFs).

3.4.1. *McGill Major Fellowships*

McGill Major Fellowships range from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year. They are given on a yearly basis, and many can be renewed for 1 or more years, contingent on your continued satisfactory academic performance. Only students who have already begun their studies at the Masters or PhD level are eligible to apply. You must apply directly through your department. You can obtain detailed information regarding the specific eligibility requirements and deadlines for each year's competition from your department or the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section. If your department is in the social sciences or humanities, the McGill Major Fellowship application deadline coincides with that of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) doctoral fellowships competition. If your department is in the natural sciences, engineering or medical science disciplines, the deadline coincides with that of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Postgraduate Scholarships competition. Both deadlines are generally during the month of October, but you should confirm these deadlines with your department during the summer—remember, planning ahead can really pay off.

If you are currently enrolled at McGill, you can get application forms from the GPSO Fellowships and Awards website at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/fellowships/> . You should return the completed forms and all supporting documents directly to your department. Do *not* send them to the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section. And remember: You need to apply early in the Fall semester 1 year *before* the award starts. Please check with your department for the specific deadline dates.

Decision letters for the McGill Major Fellowships competitions are mailed out in May. Unfortunately, the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section cannot give results over the telephone, so be patient.

If you find yourself in the fortunate situation of having won both a McGill Major Fellowship and another external or internal fellowship that is worth \$10,000 or more (including fee subsidies), you will have to decline the Major and accept the other award. In some cases, however, you may be able to keep part of the McGill Major Fellowship as a “topping up” award, so check with the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section.

3.4.2. McGill Graduate Student Fellowships

McGill Graduate Student Fellowships or MGSFs are a relatively new source of funding for graduate students. Each MGSF award is valued at \$5,000 and students may receive multiple MGSFs in any given year or they may be combined with other sources of funding. They are allocated to faculties and departments based on a number of criteria, including the department’s relative success in winning research grants and graduate student fellowships externally, and the proportion of international graduate students. MGSFs are then awarded to graduate students by the department, which may decide to use them as recruitment fellowships, funding for continuing students or both. All students both incoming and current students, are automatically considered for MGSFs by departments, so you do not need to apply for them. In many cases, departments will use MGSFs to top off other awards or as a source of funding for research assistants. In 2003-04, the University committed 1.2 million dollars for MGSFs.

McGill provides a limited number of Recruitment Fellowships that are restricted to new incoming students from outside McGill. The most prestigious are the Richard H.

Tomlinson Fellowships. These were established in 2000 through a very generous gift from Dr. Richard H. Tomlinson (Ph.D. 1948) and fund Masters students in the Faculty of Science and doctoral students from all faculties. Their current value is \$15,000/year for Masters students and \$20,000/year for PhD students. The Masters can be renewed for a second year of study (i.e., the maximum term for the award is 2 years) and the doctoral award can be renewed for 2 additional years (i.e., the maximum term for the award is 3 years).

Tomlinson fellowship award holders are selected on the basis of nominations made by departments in University-level competitions. Because of the highly competitive nature of these awards, you must be asked by a department to apply. Unsolicited applications or applications sent directly to the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section will not be accepted. For more information on the Tomlinson Fellowships, including applications deadlines, contact the department to which you are applying. You can also consult the GPSO Fellowships and Awards Section webpage: <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/fellowships/>.

A small number of recruitment fellowships are also allocated to selected academic departments for outstanding applicants seeking first-time admission to graduate studies at McGill during the following academic year. These Max Stern Recruitment Fellowships are valued at approximately \$14,000 and are not renewable. All eligible applicants are automatically considered by departments for a Max Stern recruitment fellowship, if the department has one to offer, and there are no application forms.

The GPSO also administers the Alma Mater Student Travel Grant. McGill graduate students in any discipline are eligible for financial support to travel to a

scholarly meeting or conference where they will be presenting a paper relating to their graduate research. Support for this program comes from the Alma Mater Fund of McGill University, as well as funds from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) in the case of students in the social sciences and humanities, and the Post-Graduate Student Society (PGSS).

Awards range from \$250 to \$1,000. Deadlines for applying are September 15, January 15 and May 15 of each year, although the specific deadline will depend on the date of the meeting or conference. You can find more information about the Alma Mater Student Travel Grant and download the application forms at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/fellowships/> under Travel Grants.

Finally, a number of fellowships are awarded directly by McGill departments and faculty awards committees. These are listed in the Faculty and Department chapter of the Fellowships and Awards section of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Calendar, which can be consulted at <http://www.mcgill.ca/courses/#GRAD>. Because the department, academic unit or faculty administering these awards is responsible for determining their values and setting application deadlines, these will vary greatly. So always check with your Graduate Program Coordinator or Graduate Program Director for information about awards that your department or faculty administers.

There are also several sources for graduate students who require additional funding to complete research for their theses, including costs relating to field research. For graduate students in the social sciences and humanities, the University administers a program that awards up to \$4,999 to cover research-related expenses. Information on this program, including application deadlines, can be found at

<http://www.mcgill.ca/rgo/funding/internal/sshrc/>. Several University centres and research institutes also administer small research grant programs. For example, if your research focuses on women's studies, you are eligible to apply for *Margaret Gillett Graduate Research Award* from the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women. Information on the Gillette Award can be found at <http://www.mcgill.ca/mcrtw/funding/gillett/>. So if you are affiliated with a particular centre or research institute, or know of one at McGill that is relevant to your particular research interests, you should inquire about any programs they may have to support graduate student research.

4.0

The Application Process

The first thing to remember when actually applying for fellowships is that the application process usually starts earlier than you think! Deadlines for the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Postgraduate Scholarships, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) doctoral fellowships, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) doctoral research awards, Le Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Nature et les Technologies (FQRNT, formerly FCAR) and the Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec (FRSQ) Graduate Fellowships competitions generally fall in early October. Most other external awards and McGill Majors have deadlines around the same time period. This means that you should begin planning for your applications as early as August. What does this mean?

First, you need to verify the precise deadlines for the fellowships you are applying for. For many awards, the application process starts at the departmental level and names

are forwarded to the external granting agency by McGill. This means that the *real* deadline is often considerably earlier than the official deadlines announced on the granting agency WebPages. So verify when you must have everything in order with your departmental Graduate Program Coordinator and/or the Fellowship and Awards Section of the GPSO. Sometimes, you may even need to start before the application forms for the coming year are available. In those situations, you should still start drafting your proposal or statement and discuss it with professors who you will likely ask for references.

Most, if not all, applications will require supporting documents that someone else will have to provide. In particular, you will usually need official transcripts, often from the university where you did your undergraduate work and, if you have already started, from any university where you have studied at the graduate level. These take time, especially if you are not currently studying at the university whose transcripts you must supply.

It is also important to remember that you will invariably need letters of reference from professors (and, sometimes, former employers). These people are at least as busy as you are, which means you need to give them sufficient advanced notice so that they can write the kind of letter you would expect from them. It is also important to discuss the letters with possible referees to get a sense of who is more or less likely to write you a flattering and useful letter for particular kinds of fellowships. Obviously, asking professors to write for you who gave you high grades is a good starting point, but beyond that, you should keep several things in mind. Who knows you best and therefore will be able to write the most informed letter? You may have gotten a higher grade in the 200+ person lecture course, but the professor who taught you in a small seminar will actually

have interacted with you and can add a more “personal” touch to the letter. Also, which professor is in a better position to comment on your proposed area of study?

If you already have a graduate studies supervisor, that should be the first person you ask for a letter if you have worked with him or her long enough so that he or she actually knows your work. Similarly, your undergraduate professors, particularly if they directed your senior honors project, should be considered. If you have had a semester or more of graduate studies, then you also need to make sure that you have someone who taught you at the graduate level write on your behalf—2 or 3 letters from your undergraduate professors, no matter how positive, lose credibility if you can’t find at least one graduate professor who thinks equally well of your potential. The flip side of this is that letters from former employers may help or hinder your prospects: if the fellowship criteria include actual work experience, if your program of studies is directly related to your work experience (for example, if you are in a professional program and have relevant work experience or if you worked in a lab and plan to do graduate research in the same general area), and/or leadership, community involvement, etc., are relevant to actually winning the award, by all means consider your former boss or other non-academics who know you in that light. But if you are applying for a competitive fellowship based solely on academic merit, a glowing letter from your supervisor at your last summer job only raises eyebrows.

Whoever writes reference letters for you will also want particular kinds of information (copies of transcripts, CVs, personal statements, research proposals, etc.), so ask. It is important that you provide all the forms and relevant documents at the same time, so that things don’t get misplaced. As a common courtesy, you should always

supply forms *already filled out to the best of your ability* (i.e., your name, the professor's name and mailing address, etc.) and addressed envelopes. Finally, it may be a good idea to include a note with any important instructions (e.g., a reminder of the due date, whether the letter needs to be returned to you or mailed directly, etc.). The more organized you are, the better!

In some respects, the most important part of your application is your research proposal and/or personal statement. While your grades and recommendation letters are essential, you inevitably will be competing with hundreds, if not thousands, of other people with equally good grades and strong letters of recommendation. Your grades and letters of recommendation, in comparison with those of other applicants, can be impersonal, but your proposal or personal statement will not be. In fact, they give you the only opportunity you will have to demonstrate in your own words why you deserve the fellowship. They will be scrutinized by awards committees not only to see how intelligent and original your ideas are, but also how well you communicate. A weak proposal or statement can doom an application, even if you have the highest grades from the best university. And a strong proposal can help, in part, to compensate when your grades are not as strong as you would like or when the first year or 2 of your undergraduate studies were less than stellar, but you made significant improvement in your last years.

A good proposal does 3 essential things: it tells the readers what you want to do with the fellowship, why you want to do it, and how you will accomplish what set out to do. In many cases, this also involves discussing why you have the necessary background to succeed and why the department you are studying at (or are considering) is

appropriate. Remember, you are essentially asking other people to trust you with public money, so you need to make a strong case and to be clear. And don't be fooled if the fellowship for which you are applying requires a relatively short proposal: short proposals of 1-3 pages are common and they are often the most difficult to write because you still have to answer the same basic questions (albeit in less detail!).

There are 3 keys to successful proposal writing. First, don't fill your proposal with jargon or think that your success depends on the size of your vocabulary. Know your audience and its expectations: Except for very narrow, specialized fellowships, you invariably will be writing proposals for an audience that is very well educated, but generally not familiar with the specifics of your research. This means that a big part of the art of writing scholarship proposals is knowing how to convey the originality and importance of your proposed research to people who often work in other areas. It is not easy, which is why this is such an important part of the application process: it is a useful way for the selection committee to separate out the strongest, most deserving candidates from a strong pool, even for more specialized fellowships when the selection committee's members are likely to be more familiar with your area of research.

This also means you should try to write a proposal that corresponds to your actual level of studies. No one expects a person who is just finishing their undergraduate studies to have a detailed, very specific research agenda for a program of study that they have yet to start. Your proposal should be more general because you plan to start graduate studies in order to better define your program. But if you are in the second year of a graduate program, you should have a more detailed, focused proposal; otherwise you will raise doubts about the quality of your graduate studies to date, regardless of your grades. In

other words, it is important for your proposal to reflect who you are and this cuts both ways: don't get ahead of yourself if you only plan to start your graduate studies and don't sell yourself short if you have been at it a while.

The third key to writing a good proposal is getting a second (or third or more) opinion. Even good proposals can always be made better through appropriate feedback and constructive criticism. So don't be afraid to ask your supervisor and other professors—it is their job and they have the necessary experience. But also don't limit yourself to asking only professors for feedback. Friends, even friends who know nothing about your field of interest, are often the best sources of feedback because, after all, they represent the same kind of “educated” audience (even if they have less experience) that you will need to convince.

5.0

Funding and the Admissions Decisions

Many of the most important funding decisions for McGill graduate students are made at the departmental level. Perhaps the most important decision at this level is the initial offer of funding that a department makes when it accepts your admission application. Unlike undergraduate student admissions, it is the department that awards recruitment fellowships and establishes a funding package intended to help see you through your studies at McGill. Except for those of you who apply externally for funding before you actually start your graduate studies, the level of funding and its duration that you can expect while at McGill should be clearly specified in the letter of acceptance that you receive from your department.

The departmental acceptance letter is essentially a contract between you and your department, and both of you must respect it. Particularly during the first year of your graduate studies, before you are eligible to receive other internal McGill awards or new external awards, the amount specified in your acceptance letter is all you should expect to receive. No one likes to discuss “money” issues, but you owe it to yourself—literally—to clarify any questions you might have before you actually accept the offer made to you by a department. Particularly when money is involved, transparency is the best policy—ignore it at your own risk. After you have accepted an offer and have started your studies at McGill, it usually is too late.

In practice, this means that if your department does not offer you funding at the time of acceptance, nothing is guaranteed and you should not expect the department to offer you funding in the future. For a variety of reasons, students are expected to be self-funded in a number of departments at McGill, particularly at the Masters level. So if your letter does not specify any level of funding, that may be deliberate (although the department should ideally tell you that you are expected to fund your own studies). Sometimes letters of acceptance refer to possible sources of funding, like research and teaching assistantships, but unless the letter promises specific levels of funding for a specified period of time, then do not assume they will necessarily materialize when you arrive. Hopefully they will, but don’t bet on it if you cannot afford to finance your graduate studies without them. In a similar vein, verbal promises by the department or a particular professor do not guarantee you anything: get it in writing, even if the promise is necessarily conditioned upon a professor winning a grant or expected levels of enrollment in departmental courses in the case of teaching assistantships.

6.0

Emergency Funding: The Student Aid Office is there to Help

No matter how well you planned for funding your graduate studies, things don't always work out as planned. Grants and fellowships fall through all too often. People, especially when they are starting their graduate studies or living on their own for the first time, don't always appreciate how expensive graduate school can be until the bills start arriving. As with life in general, there is always the unexpected. If you find yourself in a difficult economic situation, for whatever reason, the McGill Student Aid Office has trained staff who are ready to help, if they can. You can walk in and visit their offices in the Brown Student Services Building, 3600 McTavish Street, Suite 3200, call 398-6013 or just send an e-mail to student.aid@mcgill.ca.

7.0

Opportunities for Funding Research and Studies Abroad

McGill graduate students frequently seek opportunities to travel, both for studying at other universities and to engage in field research. Embassies, consulates and commissions of foreign countries located in Canada all are excellent sources of information on funding opportunities for students intending to study abroad. The addresses and telephone numbers of all diplomatic representatives in Canada can be obtained from the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa at (613) 996-4376.

For McGill students seeking funding for graduate study outside Canada, the graduate awards offices of foreign universities themselves are often the best source of information. The McLennan Library has a vast collection of foreign university catalogues. The French embassy in Ottawa has a complete web site on France-Canada

exchange programs at <http://ambafrance-ca.org/HYPERLAB/FFCR/index.html> under “l'aide-mémoire des échanges scientifiques franco-canadiens.” Information on funding opportunities for graduate study and research outside of Canada is also contained in many of the reference books and directories available for consultation at the GPSO (see below). One of the most comprehensive publications in this regard is UNESCO's *Study Abroad*, which is discussed in the following section.

McGill University has also signed a number of agreements with universities in other countries, many of which include a student exchange component. As a member of the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities (CREPUQ), McGill also participates in a number of student exchange programs with designated universities in the United States and Europe. The Quebec Ministry of Education also has programs for helping students to study for a term abroad. Further information on such programs may be obtained from the Student Exchanges and Study Abroad (SESA) Office in the Admissions, Recruitment and Registrar's Office, James Building Annex, McGill University. They can be reached at 398-8342 or studentexchanges@mcgill.ca. A lot of useful information is also available at the SESA website: <http://www.mcgill.ca/student-records/exchanges/>.

8.0

Funding for International Graduate Students

It sometimes seems like international graduate students get the ‘worst of both worlds’: they have to pay higher international fees, but are not eligible for many of the most important funding sources available to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. International students and their dependents are also not normally permitted by Canadian

immigration authorities to work outside the University. Moreover, immigration officials require all international students entering Canada to provide proof that they possess sufficient funds to cover at least one academic year's stay in Canada as well as return fare home (which can include offers of financial support from a McGill department). McGill's International Student Advisor suggests that single students have a minimum of \$18,000 for living expenses, in addition to tuition and ancillary fees, for every twelve months of study in Canada.

Non-Canadian students can, nonetheless, draw on a considerable variety of fellowships and other forms of assistance. There are, to begin with, several large, multi-disciplinary programs specifically aimed at funding study in Canada by students from abroad. These include: the Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Program; the Government of Canada Awards to Foreign Nationals; and the Technical Assistance Scholarships and Fellowships and Canadian Fellowship Program for French-Speaking Countries, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Applications for all these programs must be made through the government of the applicant's home country, usually via the Ministry of Education. Applications sent by individuals directly to Canada cannot be considered. More information on these, and possibly other funding sources, can be found at the Canadian Consulate in your home country.

A limited number of international students from countries that have signed a tuition fee agreement with Quebec may be exempted from the higher tuition fees normally required of students from foreign countries. The list of countries is often updated and can be consulted at [http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/ens-univ/\\$etrangers-](http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/ens-univ/$etrangers-)

[a.asp](#). Students must apply to the government authorities of their home country (usually the Ministry of Education) at the time they apply for admission to the selected Quebec university. The foreign government authorities make the official recommendation for students to be exempted from higher fees.

Apart from formal agreements signed by the Quebec provincial government and other countries, the GPSO also administers a number of Differential Fee Waivers (DFWs) per term to international students. The number McGill has is set by the Quebec government and is equal to 10% of McGill's International Students. Don't get your hopes up too high; these are in high demand. By receiving a DFW, your tuition rate is reduced to the same level that a Quebec resident would pay. Their approximate value is \$3,435 for PhD students and \$3,900 Masters students. The GPSO distributes DFWs to individual departments, which make the actual award decisions. Only international graduate students at McGill who would otherwise have to pay full international tuition fees are eligible. Recipients must be registered full-time and be within their residency period. Students in a qualifying year or additional session are not eligible. To find out what the residency period is, you can consult the *General Information section of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Calendar* at <http://www.mcgill.ca/courses/#GRAD> or the online graduate student handbook, *Smooth Sailing* at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/guidebook/>. Students in "privatized" programs are also not eligible. All eligible international students are automatically considered by departments for differential fee waivers, if the unit has them to offer, so there are no application forms.

International students are also eligible for many of McGill's Graduate Fellowships, including many of the fellowships and prizes offered by various McGill departments and faculties. Unless otherwise specified in the description, internal McGill fellowships listed in the Fellowships and Awards section of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Calendar (<http://www.mcgill.ca/courses/#GRAD>) are open to students from all countries.

If you are an international student and find yourself in financial difficulty, you should consult the International Student Services Office. They administer a limited number of short-term emergency, needs-based aid.

Additional information on opportunities for financial assistance available to international graduate students and scholars can be found in the UNESCO publication *Study Abroad*, available for consultation at the McLennan Library, as well as many national libraries around the world. *Study Abroad* can also be purchased directly from UNESCO distributors in member countries. The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) produces a Web site at <http://www.destineducation.ca/> with invaluable information for international students coming to Canada.

9.0

Thinking Ahead Planning for your Postdoctoral Studies

As you finish your doctoral studies at McGill, the possibility of obtaining a formal postdoctoral (“postdoc”) position is something many people may want to consider. For students in many natural and health science fields, it is an expected part of your training for future academic and research positions. While postdocs are not so common in the social sciences and humanities, they can similarly provide people with a rich and

invaluable experience that can make them more attractive candidates for the most competitive academic and research jobs. For anyone considering a postdoc alternative, the postdoctoral period is a unique one for building networks, gaining valuable research experience and know-how, and building up your curriculum vitae.

Funding for postdocs is often very competitive and, like all fellowships, you need to plan in advance. While it is beyond the scope of this handbook to discuss postdoc funding in detail, The Postdoctoral chapter of the Fellowships and Awards section of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Calendar, which can be consulted at <http://www.mcgill.ca/courses/#GRAD>, lists a number of awards, as do many of the other funding references referred to here. In general, McGill University policy states that postdocs must be funded during their stay at McGill at a *minimum* level equivalent to 90 percent of either the federal (NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR) or the provincial (FQRNT formerly FCAR, FRSQ or FQRSC) research council postdoctoral fellowship relating to his/her discipline, whichever is less. In 2003-04, the minimum level of Postdoc funding at McGill is \$27,000. Current levels, as well as other information relating to each funding agency's own postdoctoral programs, can be found on the web, although some particularly useful information is provided in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Postdoctoral Fellowships (Competitive Awards) from Federal and Quebec Councils

Granting Agency	Award Type	Annual Amount	Research Allowance	Duration	Application Deadline	Application Location
CIHR http://www.cihr.ca "Fellowship" Program	Post-PhD Postdoc	\$38 000	\$3 500	PhD holders = Max. 3 years health professionals who do not intend to proceed to a PhD degree = Max. 4 years health professionals who proceed to a PhD degree = Max. 5 years	October 1, February 1	CIHR
	Health Professionals without licence to practice in Canada, 0-2 yrs postgrad. research experience	\$20 000				
	Health Professionals without licence to practice in Canada, > 2 yrs postgrad. research experience	\$38 000				
	Health Professionals with licence to practice in Canada, 0-2 yrs clinical or research experience	\$38 000				
	Health Professionals with licence to practice in Canada, > 2 yrs of clinical or research experience	\$47 500				
NSERC http://www.nserc.ca	Postdoctoral Fellowship - Regular	\$40 000	n/a	Max. 2 years	November 15	NSERC
	Visiting Fellowships in Canadian Government Laboratories (VF)	\$39 804	n/a	Max. 3 years	no deadline	
	Industrial Research Fellowships	min \$40,000	n/a	Max. 2 years	Multiple deadlines	
	NATO Fellowships (for Easter-european postdocs by nomination from host professor / university)	\$33 000	n/a	Max. 2 years	McGill: Sept 25	McGill GPSO
SSHRC http://www.sshrc.ca	Postdoctoral - Regular	\$35 028	max. \$5,000	Max. 2 years	October 1	SSHRC
	Specialized programs (see SSHRC web site)	varies	varies	varies	Multiple	
FQRNT http://www.fqrnt.gouv.qc.ca	Postdoctoral	\$30 000	n/a	Max. 2 years	October 15	FQRNT
FQRSC http://www.fqrsc.gouv.qc.ca	Postdoctoral	\$30 000	n/a	Max. 2 years	October 15	FQRSC
FRSQ/ http://www.frsq.gouv.qc.ca	Postdoctoral - post PhD	\$30 000	n/a	Max. 3 years	October 15	FRSQ
	Postdoctoral - Health Professionals licenced to practise in Quebec	\$30,000 to \$39,323	n/a n/a			

If you are looking for postdoctoral funding in the medical sciences, you may wish to contact the Research and Graduate Studies Office, McGill Faculty of Medicine, 6th floor, McIntyre Medical Building, 3655 Promenade Sir William Osler, which often receives postdoctoral funding information directly from external agencies. An informal information site on postdoctoral fellowships and employment in the Sciences and Health Sciences has been compiled by the Association Bernard Gregory in France at

Table 4. Postdoctoral stipends paid from grants

Granting Agency	Type of stipend	Minimum Amount	Maximum Amount	Additional Mandatory Amount
CIHR*	Post PhD	\$35 000	n/a	Federal Councils allow for the payment of non-discretionary benefits over and above the amount of the stipend. At McGill, single coverage under the PGSS Supplemental Health and Dental Plan is a mandatory benefit and must be included in the budget of professors' research grant applications. Rate in 2003-04: \$447. per annum
	Health Professionals, licenced in Canada, 0-2 yrs postgrad academic experience	\$35 000	n/a	
	Health Professionals, licenced in Canada, > 2 yrs postgrad academic experience	\$45 000	n/a	
	Health Professionals, not licenced in Canada	\$17,000**	\$35 000	
NSERC*	Postdoctoral	\$25,000**	n/a	
SSHRC*	Postdoctoral	n/a**	\$31 500	
FQRNT FQRSC FRSQ Other agencies which do not stipulate stipend rates	No minimum or maximum determined by Quebec agencies, and some other external agencies. McGill Guidelines: Minimum \$27,000. Grant applications should budget for at least the maximum allowable by the corresponding federal granting agency in the field of research. Where only a minimum is stipulated, grant applications should forecast for an amount that ensures equity within the research group and academic unit.			

* Source: Tricouncil document entitled "Use of Grant Funds":
at time of publication (2003-08-01 update)

http://www.nserc.ca/professors_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=f3

** Subject to McGill's policy stipulating that the minimum stipend for a postdoc is \$27,000 (90% of the lowest council fellowship value in the discipline).

<http://www.abg.asso.fr/> under "L'emploi sur Internet." It provides links with various relevant sites. Information is also available through the SPIN Database, which is accessible at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/fellowships/publications/spin/>.

Finally, timing is very important for postdoc funding. Many agencies have strict deadlines not only for applying, but also for finishing your doctoral degree. Also, Quebec regulations stipulate that a person is eligible to be a postdoc for a maximum of 5 years after receiving his or her degree, as explained in the *Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Calendar*, which can be consulted at <http://www.mcgill.ca/courses/#GRAD>.

Finally, Science Next Wave offers a web site: "Postdoc Network" - connecting postdoc organizations, program administrators, and offices serving postdocs as they work to meet the professional development needs of postdocs. You may browse this publication at <http://nextwave.sciencemag.org/pdn/>.

10.0 *When In Doubt or If You Have Questions: The Fellowships and Awards Section of GSPO*

Funding your graduate studies is important and requires a certain amount of personal initiative on your part. But you are not alone. The Fellowships and Awards Section of GSPO is there to help. The Fellowships and Awards Section provides information and administers several major internal and external fellowship competitions each year. The Section also coordinates McGill applications and distributes information related to numerous graduate and postdoctoral fellowship and award competitions administered outside the University. It works closely with individual applicants, academic departments at McGill, and external granting agencies in order to facilitate applications for all these sources of funding.

As you might imagine, the staff of the Fellowships and Awards Section is well-informed and friendly. All current and prospective McGill students are encouraged to visit, call, e-mail or write to obtain further information on appropriate sources of funding for graduate education. If you take the initiative, the GSPO staff can help you go a long way toward finding satisfactory solutions for your funding needs as actual or prospective McGill graduate students.

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- 11.0** This guidebook was written by Associate Dean of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Philip Oxhorn with the help of Claude Lalande, Manager of Fellowships and Awards in the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Office