Information for Potential Applicants

PhD in Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences

Admission of new students to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences occurs twice per year, in September (Fall semester) and January (Winter semester).

January 2021:

Applications for January 2021 will be accepted from February 15, 2020, to **September 10, 2020** (**September 15, 2020,** for Canadian citizens, permanent residents of Canada, and current McGill students regardless of citizenship).

September 2021:

Applications for September 2021 will be accepted from September 15, 2020, to **February 28, 2021**; applications are reviewed on a rolling basis beginning in mid-January.

There are many steps to be completed before an application can be submitted. You may find helpful information here: http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply/prepare.

Applying

If you choose to apply, you would do so through the uApply website, at http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply. You would be required to upload your transcripts and personal statement, and two referees would also upload their letters of reference. A TOEFL score (or equivalent) may also be required; additional information is available here: https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/international/apply/proficiency.

We do not require the GRE.

Financial support – stipend and fee subsidy

Stipend

Many of our students arrive without an external fellowship. In such cases our department provides a stipend of **CAD $23,000 per year** in the years prior to PhD 6 to full-time students who maintain satisfactory standing in our PhD program. Some supervisors will provide this annual stipend until the end of the PhD 7 year.[1]

Please note that if a student is awarded an external scholarship or other financial support, the departmental contribution to the student's funding will be reduced. However supervisors in our department offer a significant financial top-up to students who have received a major award.

[1] Very rarely, applicants hoping to secure funding from outside Canada may receive a **conditional offer of admission** to our PhD program; in such exceptional cases the student may not receive a stipend from our department. This information would be clearly stated in the letter of offer.

Subsidy of international fees

In addition to the stipend, our department offers a **partial subsidy of international fees** up to and including the end of the PhD 4 year. For 2019-2020 the value of this subsidy will be approximately **CAD $13,950 per year** (up to and including the PhD 4 year) for most international students admitted to our PhD program. This subsidy ensures that full-time international students who maintain satisfactory standing in our PhD program pay

- the same tuition fees and
- the same non-tuition fees charged by Student Accounts

as Quebec residents, up to and including the end of the PhD 4 year.

Evaluation of the applicant's dossier

The normal requirement for admission to the Ph.D. program is a strong background in meteorology, physical oceanography, or related disciplines such as mathematics, physics, and engineering. Many students will have an M.Sc. degree in one of these fields, although this is not a formal requirement. Students without a master's degree in atmospheric science (meteorology) or physical oceanography will enter at the Ph.D. 1 rather than the Ph.D. 2 level, and devote the first year of the program mainly to coursework.

PhD applicants cannot receive an offer of admission unless a department faculty member accepts to supervise the applicant. Most supervisors in our department review the student's transcript to try to determine whether the student can excel in graduate-level courses and can perform quantitative research. Most supervisors generally care most about the quantitative background: math, physics, and upper-level physical science courses. Strong grades in these courses are likely to be needed. Other positive attributes such as computing skills and/or strong letters of reference (from respected scientists) would also work in your favor.

If you would like to know what level of math is normally required, you can use our undergraduate major program as a guideline:
https://www.mcgill.ca/study/2020-2021/faculties/science/undergraduate/programs/bachelor-science-bsc-major-atmospheric-science.

Please note that the number of places for new PhD students is limited, and that successful applicants to our PhD program typically have a CGPA ranging from 3.5/4.0 to 4.0/4.0, although in exceptional cases applicants with a CGPA in the range of 3.2-3.49/4.0 may also be successful. Applicants presenting the minimum CGPA are not necessarily guaranteed admission; in addition to the CGPA, reference letters, applicant interests, the applicant's research/training background, and other admission requirements are all carefully reviewed during the evaluation of an application.

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Finding a supervisor

It is very strongly recommended that applicants to the PhD program contact potential supervisors. As mentioned above, PhD applicants cannot receive an offer of admission unless a department faculty member accepts to supervise the applicant. It is best to review our faculty members' research interests to determine which potential supervisors best match your interests and goals. You are welcome to send your CV to those potential supervisors, with a message explaining why you wish to work with the potential supervisor, and which aspects of their research match your interests. Our advice is:

1- Explain why you are interested in their research (mention a specific paper they wrote, or discuss one of their areas of interest; be specific, demonstrate that you have found and read information about their professional activities), and
2- Explain why your background is a good match for their research area or research group

Information concerning our faculty members, with links to descriptions of their research interests, is available at https://www.mcgill.ca/meteo/facultystaff/faculty-0. (Click on a faculty member's name for a description of their research interests; see also the links to faculty members' websites.)

Personal statement

The personal statement is an essay in which the applicant describes their reasons for applying to graduate studies, and indicating qualifications, qualities or circumstances the applicant feels to be significant; this document usually provides information about educational and professional goals.

One page is sufficient; two pages are also acceptable. You may want to explain some/all of the following in the personal statement:

- Why you are interested in the program;
- Which aspects of Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences are of most interest to you, and why;
- Which faculty members you would most wish to work with, and why;
- Why you are a strong candidate for the program.

Additional information

You can find additional information concerning the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences on the following web pages:

- Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at McGill University – Graduate Programs
- Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at McGill University – Prospective Graduate Students
- McGill University eCalendar – PhD Program in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences

Should you have questions, please contact Manuela Franzo, the Graduate Program Coordinator, at graduateinfo.aos@mcgill.ca.